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**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL IRANIAN  
CITIES DURING THE ISLAMIC PERIOD**

**by**

**KAMAL NIROUMAND RAHIMI**

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**Dissertation submitted for the Degree of Master of  
Arts in the Human Geography of the Middle East and  
Mediterranean.**

**October, 1977**

ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the pattern of change and the historical development of the Central Iranian cities, particularly during the Islamic period.

In a brief discussion the geographical context in which Iranian cities can be identified is introduced.

The thesis tries to find an adequate periodization as regards the urban development in Iran. Urban morphology of each period is examined in relation to the socio-economic conditions of the period. An attempt is made to identify the urban structure of each period and compare it with other periods in order to follow the patterns of change.

In this investigation social and geographical forces have proved to be the most essential factors in the process of change.

At the end some of the old central Iranian cities are examined as existing examples.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Introduction

For the last century the city has been a subject of study for several branches of human sciences. Each has approached the subject within the interests and abilities of its own discipline. The research concerning history, geography, sociology and economics has questioned this phenomenon producing different answers with reference to certain aspects of the city. Despite the differences, they give unanimous support to the point that the city is a man made and living phenomenon.

Cities, like living things, are born and they develop. Hence they are subject to change. Dynamics of this change are, broadly speaking, subject to two sets of forces, social and environmental. As each of these forces influence different aspects of the city, the structure of the city is the outcome of those internal and external forces at any given time. Social forces form the urban morphology; they mould the pattern of spatial arrangement. It is due to the relationship of men, their material lives, their beliefs and their every day practices that the spaces of a social environment such as a city are shaped. The subject of urban geography studies the outcome of those human interactions which are materialized in the form of urban districts, quarters, shanty towns, slums, settlements of minority groups, patterns of migrations, etc..

Geographical forces are also effective in shaping the physical cluster of the city. Climatic conditions and the availability of construction materials, for example, affect building techniques and produce specific forms. It is the variety in urban structure due to such geographical forces which has been the basis for the distinction and classification of cities.

Cities of the Iranian Plateau are generally named as either Islamic or Middle Eastern. There are other classifications which do not consider them being cities at all.<sup>1</sup> The latter argument is based on presumptions made concerning an ideal type historical urban development which has taken place in only one small part of the world i.e. western Europe. Those who speak of the Islamic city also construct their argument on an ideal type in which Islamic institutions are the determinant factors which give shape to the city.<sup>2</sup> There are, however, two major weaknesses in their argument. First, the institutional analysis can not explain the transformation, nor can it see a phenomenon as an historical process. Thus this theory assumes the "Islamic City" to have a continuous traditional structure. Second, even with this static position, it fails to establish any relationship between different sectors of the society and comes to the conclusion that "Muslim cities are self contained entities which comprise a distinct society and culture, radically



different and opposed to that of the peasantry and the countryside."<sup>3</sup> Further studies of "Muslim societies" in the late 1940's and 50's, however, forced those who supported the concept of "Islamic Cities" to reconsider their beliefs and accept the presence of an organic relationship between the town and the countryside. The Islamic City concept was also propounded by followers of the empirical method of investigation (mainly geographers). Through their observations of physical features in those cities such as mosque, maidan, bazaar, suq etc. some of them have tried to explain the "Islamic City" by its appearance and relate it to societies in which Islam is the dominant religion. This attempt, however, failed to explain why the two most populated muslim regions of the world have not produced such cities (Indonesia and Bangladesh). Theoretical and even empirical difficulties of the "Islamic City" have led to the new generalization, more geographically based, of the Middle Eastern city. The concept of the Middle Eastern city was, therefore, accepted by those who rejected the "Islamic City" for its inadequacy but not its theoretical framework. Methods of their study adopted were either functionalist or empiricist.

Without discussing theoretical problems of any such concepts, this paper tries to follow the historic formation and transformation of urban centres in central Iranian Plateau mainly in its mediaeval period. The first

major obstacle encountered is the inadequacy of actual periodization of the Iranian history (see Chapter 2). In order to divide the Iranian history into relevant periods concerning urban transformation, primary materials and archaeological studies are used as main sources. A second problem was to formulate a definition for "the city" which was adequate throughout the period of study. This, however, proved to be an absurd thought for the very reason that no definition could remain adequate throughout the study of this transhistorical concept where the city itself was considered to be a historical phenomenon and subject to transformation. Hence, the concepts and definitions used by contemporaries for each period were accepted as those most relevant and adequate to the city at that time. The third difficulty was the geographical classification of cities on a regional basis. For this purpose regional potentials such as agricultural prosperity, trade routes, etc. are used as basis of identification in a historical context. The background on which this study is based is the social history of urban classes in Iran which determines the true substance of urban structure at any given time .

## CHAPTER I

### Geographical conditions of the Iranian Plateau in relation to City Centres

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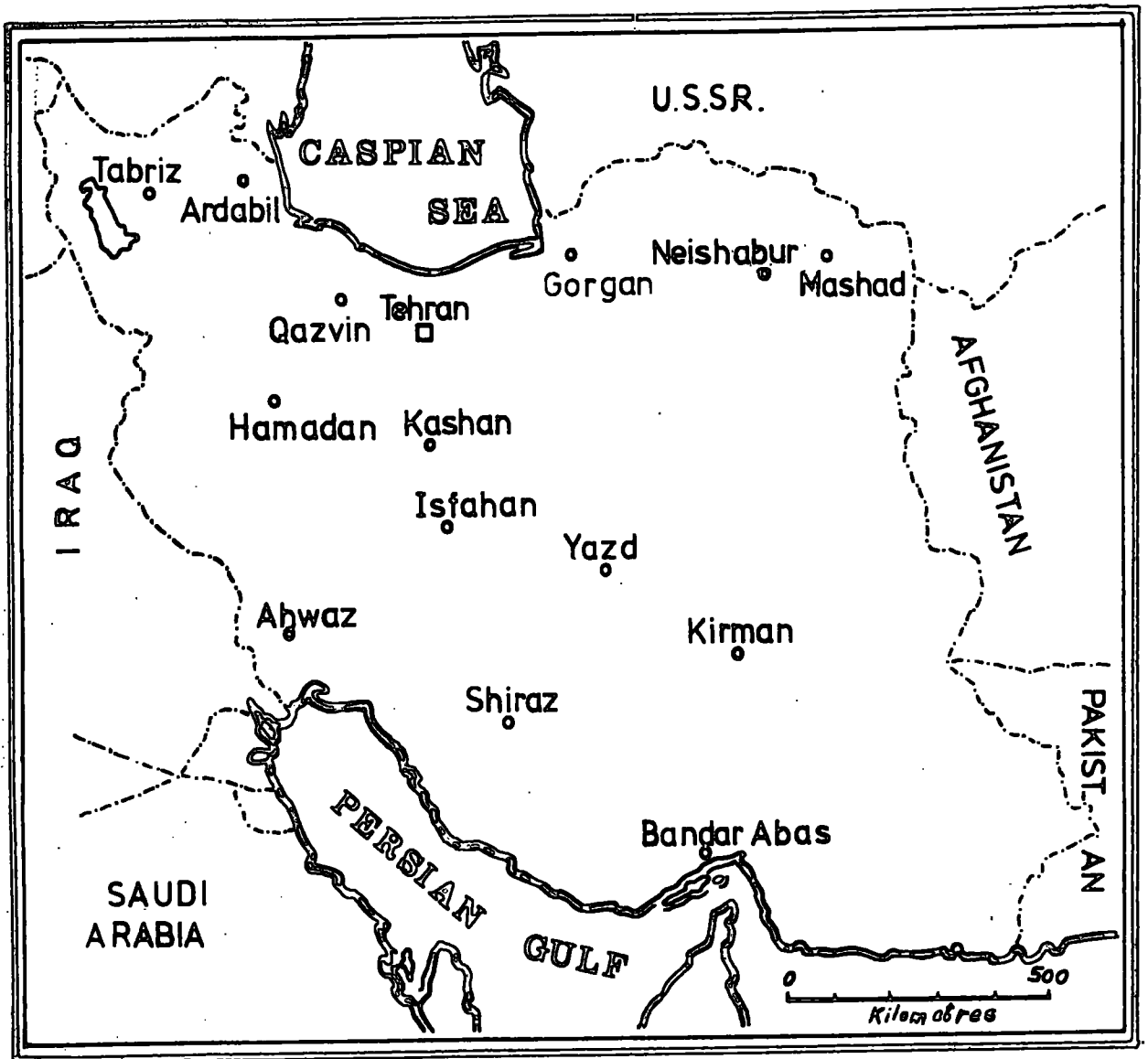
Physical environment is undoubtedly the substance in which human societies have developed and influenced history. It might be in this connection that geography, as a science, has always felt responsible to answer questions about the actual diversities and the differences which exist between human societies, their cultures, their behaviours and their feelings. There is no question that the natural environment has a dominant effect over primitive communities and their almost complete surrender to the landscape. The more man developed, the more his ambitions and ability to dominate the natural environment grew. The development of man in order to master the forces of nature, however, took place in a social environment. Hence, his hegemony over the physical environment was the result of his "Social development". It was in this historical interaction that man transformed and changed nature to suit his simple and complex needs. Towns and cities are man-made environments and should be seen as the outcome of an inter-relationship between social and geographical forces.

The rise and fall of the Iranian cities as well as their pattern of development have been strongly influenced by geographical factors. The influence of the natural

environment on the formation and development of the Iranian cities was mediated by the social life. It is in this context that physical geography of the Iranian Plateau becomes important for studying settlements in Iran.

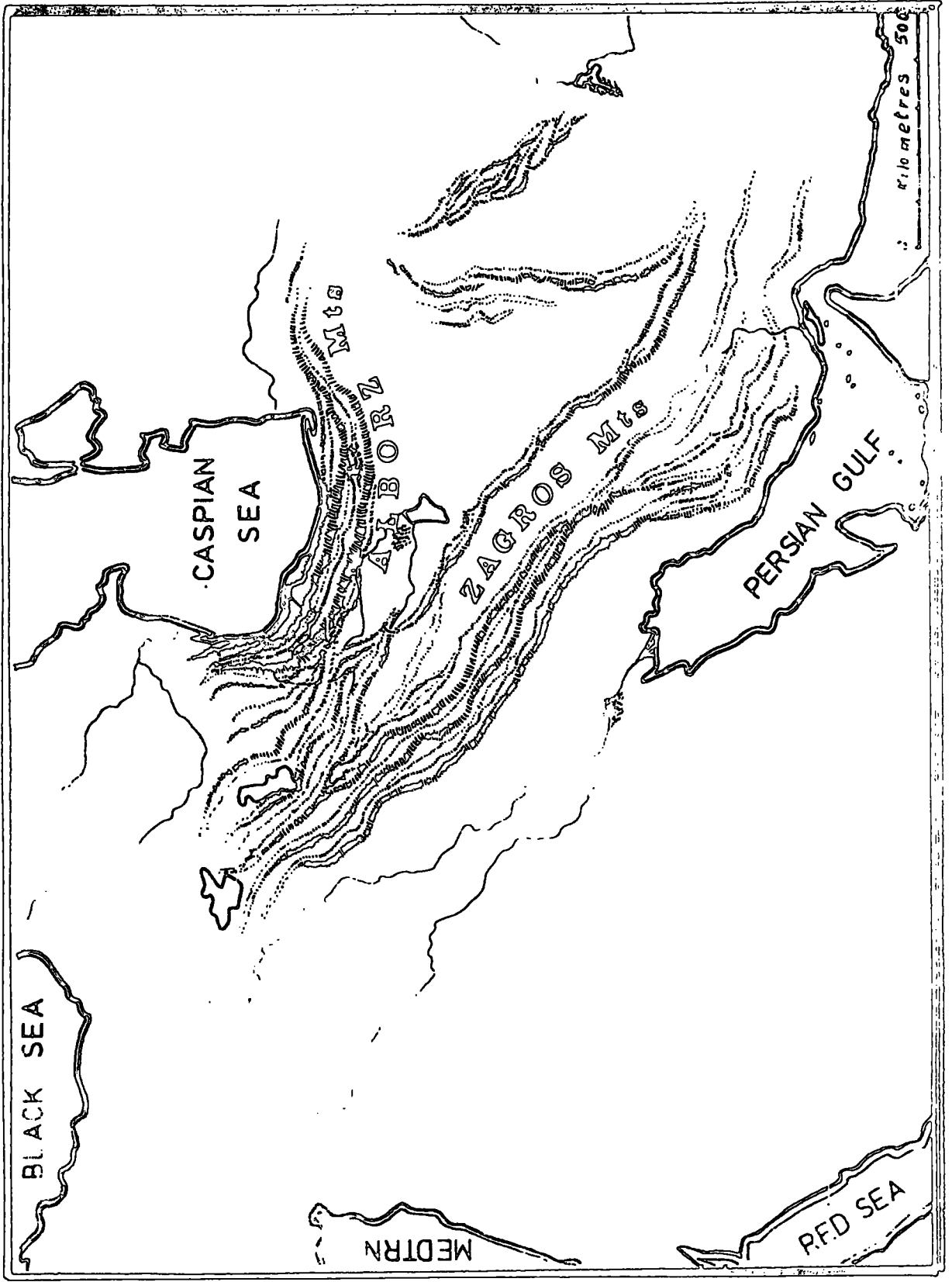
Professor De Planhol, after a careful examination of the Iranian cities in relation to the geographical conditions, observed a pattern of distribution of urban centres which, according to him, is "anomalous and contrary to the exigences of the natural environment."<sup>1</sup> He, then, inevitably envisages the question: "What human and historical factors have combined to bring about such a state of affairs?"<sup>2</sup> In the search for a correct answer to this question, the validity of the former assertion is less acceptable. Before proceeding into the discussion, a brief introduction of the geographical conditions of the Iranian Plateau is needed.

Iran occupies an area of 1,648,000 sq. kms. Its present boundaries were fixed during the 19th century with the enactment of different treaties. During the mediaeval period (A.D. 9th to 16th centuries) Iran frequently stretched towards the east i.e. towards the present day Russian Turkistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and even India. Less often, however, it extended to the west of its present frontiers. There is a disagreement among the geographers on what constitutes the Iranian



Map No. 1

Plateau. Some believe it to be the area between the valleys of the Indus on the east and of the Tigris on the west.<sup>3</sup> Professor Fisher, discussing the political implications of the Iranian Plateau, suggests that the term should be geographically applied to the actual Iranian upland zone that corresponds to the existing political unit.<sup>4</sup> In this paper the term is used accordingly. The northern and southern natural boundaries of the Plateau are beyond dispute. They are defined by the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. In altitude the Plateau exceeds 5000 ft. at Kirman, 4000 at Shiraz, and 3000 in the regions of Tehran and Mashad, while Tabriz in the extreme north-west exceeds 5000 feet and Yazd 4000. These figures are of interest because they bring out the contrast between the inhabited parts of the Plateau, and the great desert which occupies the heart of the country and lies considerably lower although rising everywhere above 2000 ft. The major physical units forming the Iranian Plateau are the surrounding mountains and the interior basins contained within the surrounding mountain rim. There are two major mountain ranges in Iran. Zagros, which extends from north-west to south-east occupying the western parts of the country. Alborz, which stretches from north-west to north-east of the country separating the Central Plateau from the Caspian Sea and its eastern flat lands. Another topographical feature of the Iranian Plateau is the existence of large



Map No. 2

THE TWO MOUNTAIN  
RANGES, ALBORZ &  
ZAGROS EMBRACING  
THE IRANIAN PLATEAU

uninhabited desert areas in the centre. This geographical factor explains the fact that all Iranian Cities are peripheral. On the other hand, the deserts and mountains have made the communication between the cities difficult.

It is not only in terms of topography that the Iranian Plateau reveals great variation but it is also varied in terms of the climate. Generally speaking Iran is a semi-arid country. The mean annual precipitation for the country is about 400 mm.<sup>5</sup> But the rain is not evenly distributed. The Caspian lowlands representing 10% of the present day Iran receive one-third of the total precipitation. With the exception of the Caspian region, the highest rain receiving regions are associated with the mountain regions of the Alborz and Zagros. Many parts of the Central Plateau receive scarcely any water at all.

Taking into account the fact that dry farming is impossible under the 250 mm. of annual rainfall, problems of agricultural production in the Iranian Plateau are evident. Insofar as rivers as sources for surface irrigation are concerned, the Iranian Plateau is not endowed with major rivers comparable to the Nile or the Sind. Karun is the only navigable river of Iran running in the south-west towards the Persian Gulf. The most important river in the western basin inside the central Plateau is Zayandeh-Rud which irrigates the Isfahan region. Among other rivers, one can name Aras, the classical Araxes in

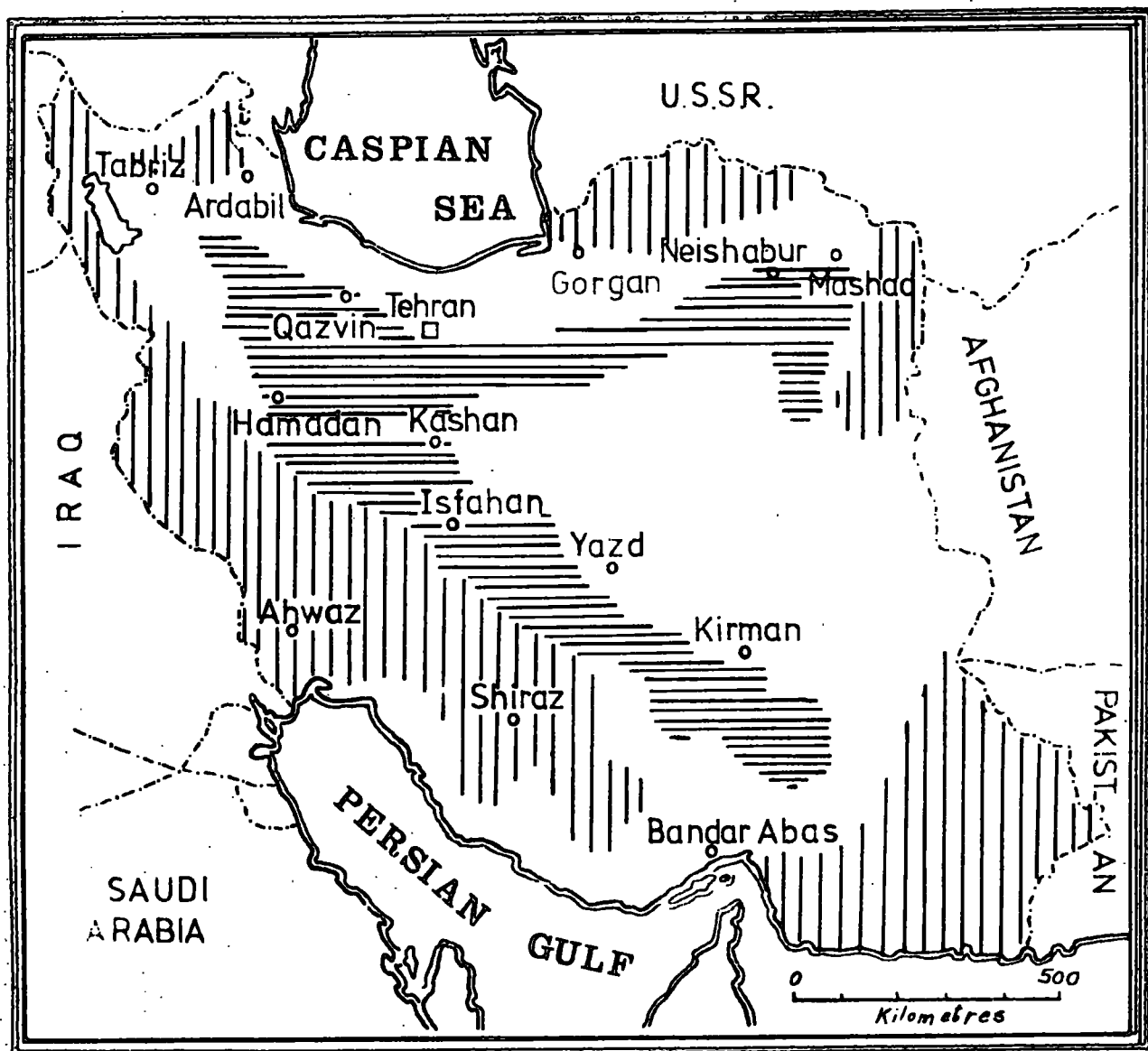


the north, Kizil Uzun, the classical Amardis in the west and Hari-Rud and Hirmand in the east. All those rivers are important irrigation sources but most of them dry up in the hot seasons.

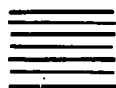
Knowing that almost 69% of Iran is desert and wasteland makes it easier to realize the importance of cultivated lands.<sup>6.</sup>

In the absence of adequate rainfall and extensive river systems, people of the Plateau have developed a technique to extract ground water i.e. the Qanat system.<sup>7.</sup> Qanat "consists of a gently sloping tunnel which conduits water from an infiltration section beneath the water table to the ground surface by gravity flow".<sup>8.</sup> The distribution pattern of qanats shows that they are mostly situated in areas where the annual precipitation is under 300 mm.<sup>9.</sup> Thus, the qanat system has brought cultivation to the land which otherwise would have been unproductive. Regions of Zagros and Alborz where annual precipitation allows dry farming and livestock raising, however, have developed another mode of life.

In the studies of the social and economic history of Iran, distinctions have often been made between settled and unsettled population, the peasant and nomadic way of life in which peasant life is associated with cultivation and the nomadic with livestock raising. Here, the



Map No. 3



IRRIGATED CULTIVATION REGIONS



DRY FARMING & NOMADIC REGIONS

suggestion is that distinction between dry farming and irrigated farming is as crucial as those named above. This is precisely the case where the question of the development of cities is concerned. Elaboration of this suggestion clarifies what Professor De Planhol calls "anomalous and contrary to the exigencies of the natural environment."

Grain, basically wheat and barley was, and still is, the dominant crop in Iran. At the present time, the average production of grain in dry farming areas (on about 30% of the tilled area in 1956)<sup>10.</sup> varies from 290 kg. to 360 kg. per hectare,<sup>11.</sup> while the irrigated farming sector produces an average of 850 kg. to 1900 kg. per hectare.<sup>12.</sup> Before the introduction of modern means of agricultural production (some 35 years ago), the same traditional means of production was used as in mediaeval times. Therefore there is no reason why one should not apply the same productivity potentials to those times.

Despite the considerable difference between the per hectare amount of grain production in dry farming and irrigated sectors, both sectors were operated by self-sufficient peasants. Thus, in the prevailing tributary system, the difference lies in the amount of surplus extracted from each sector. The dominant form of surplus extraction was share cropping. Despite all the Islamic and non-Islamic conditions for share cropping systems

there were great regional differences in practice. After Lambton's regional studies it would be reasonable to take the figure of 1/5 of the crop in dry farming areas and 1/2 in irrigated regions as the share collected by the landlord.<sup>13.</sup>

Taking into account the differences in per hectare productivity of the two kinds of grain production, the share of the landlord from one hectare of irrigated field would be 750 kg. while his share from one hectare of dry farming field would be only 60 kgs. In other words his share from the irrigated sector is about 12 times more than the other. It should be noted that from the approximately 11 million hectares of land under cultivation in Iran (in the second half of the 20th century) only 1/3 has been under the irrigated method.<sup>14.</sup> As far as the traditional irrigation system in mediaeval Iran is concerned, there is no evidence to indicate a drastic change in the area or the system of agricultural production.<sup>15.</sup> Hence, the proportion of 2 to 1 can be accepted for the mediaeval period as well.

Remembering that irrigated farming has taken place mostly at the borders of the central desert where the precipitation has prevented dry farming methods, the pattern of distribution of cities will coincide with the pattern of distribution of surplus producing regions. The fact that the archaic princely camps or mediaeval towns and cities have always been reproduced in those semi-arid regions can also be attributed to those with less promising

climatic and geographical features but with high agricultural productivity potentials. In contrast, the western mountainous regions of the Plateau, where a lesser amount of agricultural surplus was extracted, did not induce the development of large cities. Other factors bearing direct relevance to the formation of cities in the Iranian Plateau will be discussed in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CITY CENTRES AND URBAN LIFE IN IRAN

'7th Century B.C. to 7th Century A.D.

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It is customary for historians to divide the history of Iran into 'pre-Islamic' and 'Islamic' periods or, more commonly, the decision is made on a dynastic basis and the name of rulers.

In the case of this study, so far as cities are concerned, a more relevant classification is necessary. Urban life and cities experienced substantial changes during their history in Iran. Many of those cities have gone through periods of prosperity and decline. Some survived serious devastation and got rebuilt. Others disappeared forever and their sites were left for archaeologists to uncover. Each part of the Iranian Plateau, according to its location and specific political and economic relations with central powers at any given time, and also due to its own role in the total structure of the country, has had a different experience in the urban transformation process. Historical classification, therefore, needs a parallel dimension introducing the area involved and its potential as regards this process. Thus, for the sake of accuracy, in this subject historical classification needs to be identified on a geographical basis.

Although geographical conditions in Iran vary

considerably, there is one fairly significant limiting factor to which most parts of the country are subject, namely, lack of water. According to archaeological evidence, early settlements of Iran were mostly located along the Zagros and the Alborz ranges (the two ranges of mountains embracing the Iranian Plateau). Climatic conditions and availability of primary necessities in those areas enabled settlements to develop.

Iranian society was patriarchal. Its structure, according to Christensen,<sup>1</sup> consisted of four communal units in early times: MNANA (the house), VIS (the village), ZANTU (the tribe) and DAHYU (the country). At the head of each of these institutions there was a chief, a director or superior (PAD) (i.e. NMAN PAD, VIS PAD, ZANTU PAD and DAHYU PAD). Herzfeld<sup>2</sup> assumed only three degrees in the Iranian tribal constitutions and translated them : VIS (clan), ZANTUS (tribe) and DAHYAUS (nation). He suggested that the three degrees signified the people as well as their habitat. Geiger's<sup>3</sup> assumption was that "The tribal nature of society in early times determined that the village made up of a clan should be the model settlement".

Here one tends to agree with those who prefer that the ancient social classification in Iran is on a communal basis. Therefore, apart from NMANA (the house or family), VIS could rather be 'clan', ZANTU

(tribe) and DAHYU (community).

MEDIAN CIVILIZATION (700 B.C. - 550 B.C.)

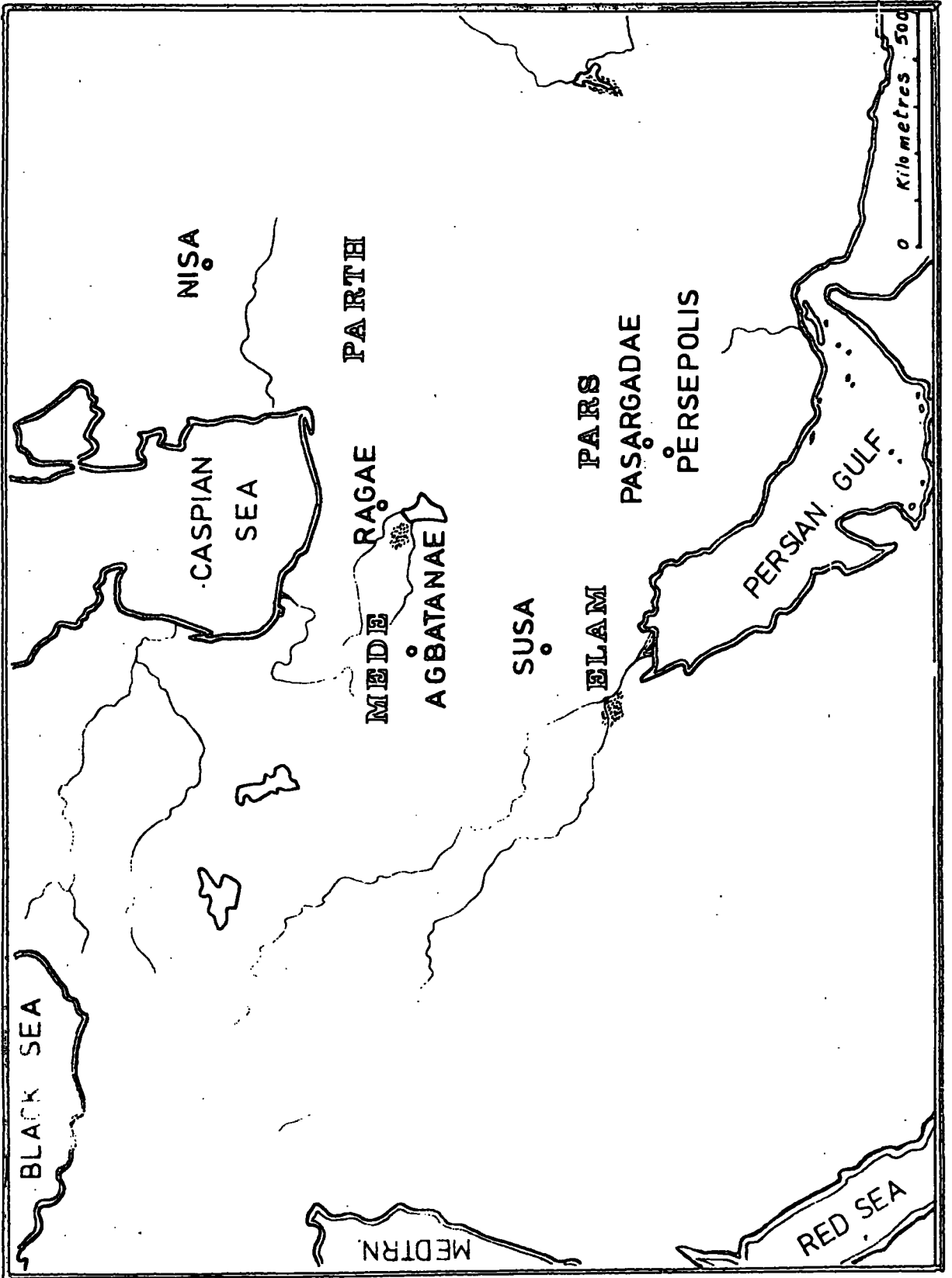
The first state in Iran was established by Medians.<sup>4</sup> At that time the Persian plateau was occupied by three different communities - MEDIANS, PARSISANS and PARTHIANS (see map 4). This first state, however, was to a large extent an enlargement of the tribal political structure; in other words, it was the hegemony of MEDIANS over others. The three regions forming the MEDIAN Kingdom were ruled under seven families in a non-despotic way.<sup>5</sup> Settlements at this period were either political and military centres or simply villages.

At the beginning of their appearance Iranians came into contact with three distinctive civilizations in the west and north-west of the plateau; the ASSYRIANS, the URARTAEANS and the MANAEANS. A fourth political power was Elli or Ellipi, which appears in Sargon's<sup>6</sup> inscriptions located between ELAM (now Khuzestan) and MEDES.

The civilizations of these neighbouring societies were crucial to the cultural development of Iran. The Assyrian annals, especially the records of Sargon's eighth campaign, give a picture of the region.<sup>7</sup>

These reports and pictures show the presence of





Map No. 4

LOCATION OF THE THREE  
ANCIENT COMMUNITIES  
OF THE IRANIAN PLATEAU  
AND THE NEIGHBOURING  
ELAM

relatively advanced and complex human agglomerations in the neighbourhood of MEDES at the time of its foundation. It is suggested that the temple, or the physical representative of the dominant ideology (the religion) used to be the centre of gravity of those settlements.

For AGBATANAE, capital of MEDES, there are two different and contradictory descriptions, both by foreign reporters. Agbatanae (now called Hamadan) as sketched by Herodotus <sup>8</sup>. is a city with "seven round walls of increasing height, with battlements painted in white, black, purple, lapis blue, orange, the last two plated with silver and gold)." While Polibius <sup>9</sup>. (around 210 B.C.) reported "Agbatanae had no walls at all, only the citadel was astonishingly strong." The report continues "... below was the palace area, seven 'stadia' in circumference" (little more than one kilometre). "The palaces had columns and roofs of cedar and cypresses", recalling Sargon's description of North-west Iranian cities. This description was written almost 450 years after the foundation of AGBATANAE.

The MEDIAN epoch is the 'darkest' of Iranian history and very little is known of cities and urban life during that part of the history. Apart from the differences in details, what can be sketched after these accounts is the presence of a capital city, a political centre, well secured

and dominated by the 'palace area'. It seems that, unlike her neighbouring societies, in MEDE secular institutions were stronger. Dominance of the palace, as the representative of the political power (the state), is the typical characteristic of archaic cities in Iran.

The foundation of the ACHAEMENIAN dynasty (first in PARS and later as the ruling power of the whole area) was, at the beginning, simply a shift of power from one family to the other.

After defeating MEDES, Cyrus kept their capital city (Agbatanae) as his capital and many Medians were recruited to administrative occupations.<sup>10</sup> This fact reveals two considerations. First the absence of an established political centre (a city) capable of becoming the capital of the country. Second, the conquerors' lack of administrative experience. The political centre, however, was shifted to PARS hinterland later. That was when PASARGADAE became the capital of PARS.

With the ACHAEMENIANS a new era began in Iran. In Ghirshman's words, "It was, therefore, to the Achaemenians that Iran owed the conception and formation of a single Persian state."<sup>11</sup> Unification of different communities of the Iranian plateau for over a century and a half during the MEDIANS had enabled further commercial and cultural exchange either inside or outside the plateau.

The presence of more advanced societies to the west and their mutual relationship with Iran had helped to enrich the material culture of Iranians and had caused a further division of labour resulting in the development of settlements. The conquest of Achaemenians, incorporating western neighbours to the Empire, however, had a considerable impact on Iranian art and culture.

### THE EMPIRE

The Achaemenian Empire consisted of the whole of modern Turkey, then composed of Phrgia, Mysia, Lydia, Ionia, Caria, Ciligia, Cappadocia and Lycia; the so-called sea peoples - Cyprus, Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine and Assyria; all the eastern coast of the Mediterranean sea; the east bank of the Nile river and parts of modern Egypt. On the north, Colchis and Armenia between the Black sea and the Caspian sea; Chorasmia between the Caspian and the Aral sea, and Bactria east of the Oxus (Amudarya river). From the east the frontier of the Empire touched the Indus river and comprised modern Afghanistan, Pakistan and northern parts of India.

To control such a vast area, standing armies were organized and many camps were built at strategic points within the Empire. Road building developed to enable fast movements for the army as well as messengers. According to Christensen<sup>12</sup>. "The road joining Euphesus"

(a western Turkish port on the Egean sea) "to Susa"  
(an ancient city of Elam, now Khusestan province of Iran)  
"with a length of 2700 Km. had 111 stations and  
caravanserais for travellers." A caravan would spend  
three months on it, while a royal message or report to  
the court travelled the route in seven days.<sup>13</sup> Commun-  
ication, then a political necessity, was another factor  
facilitating commerce and the development of towns.

Before 500 B.C. tributes from different provinces  
(then called Satrapi) to the central treasury were casual  
and there were no regulations for the amount or type of  
collection. During his reign (B.C. 521 - 485) Darius  
developed these regulations. Tax of Satrapi was calculated  
on its economic suitability. At this time, although the  
seven families were still the nobles and had some privileges,  
Satraps (governors of provinces) were appointed and  
strictly controlled by the king. A regulated tributary  
system and political division of the country were both  
results of the establishment of a 'State' with a 'centralized'  
establishment in a class society.

Expansion of the country led to the enlargement  
of the government, establishment of a standing army,  
regulation of tax collection to meet the costs of the  
centralized Empire and its by-product, a large bureau-  
cratic set up. The outcome of this was the transformation  
of the old kinship nobility into the establishment of a new

political hierarchy attached to the Palace.

The contradiction between the central power (the Palace) and its political representative (the Satrap) existed from the very beginning of this system. This contradiction was based on the difference between the socio-political and economic identity of the Satrap. He was the immediate collector of the surplus from the land. He also was the actual ruler of the land. But this was mediated through the central power (i.e. his political identity), which alienated him from the land itself.

Thus it is awkward to rely on conclusions such as the one of Christensen who, after the establishment of the Satrapi system, declares "Voilà, les Origines du féodalisme en Perse." <sup>14</sup>. For such an announcement one basic element was missing and that was the political ability of the Satrap to control the economic structure. That is, in fact, what the Satrap was potentially looking for. There were two major obstacles, however, preventing the Satrap becoming a kind of feudal lord. First, the lack of any place for the landed nobility in the Iranian patriarchal society with strong kinship relations. Second, the Satrap's position in the political structure of the society. When looking at the original documents and accounts of the period it is not difficult to see that in several crucial aspects the Great King exerted strict control over his satraps. <sup>15</sup>. Having

said that, one can hardly agree with the other extremist idea that "Definitely and conspicuously, he (the King) was the master, the satrap the serving man who owed him absolute obedience." 16.

After what was said, one tends to accept that the Great King represented more than a political sovereign and he ruled as if he had the ultimate possession of the forces of production, or he was the objective embodiment of communal ownership. The consequence of it, however, was the tendency of the Great King towards an absolute control.

Most of the discovered built up areas left from the Achaemenian Empire consist of either monumental buildings or military camps. The outstanding monuments of the period are the palaces. 17. The need for manual labour for all those huge construction works needed a permanent and controlled labour force. This, however, was not very difficult to organize in such a society.

It is suggested that Achaemenian kings were not content with a single residence. 18. The result was the construction of several royal complexes. Before building Pasargadae, Cyrus had chosen Susa as his capital, then Egbatanae and Babylon. Darius, after a brief sojourn at Babylon, divided his time between Susa and Persepolis (see map). 19.

Pasargadae (about 80 Km. north-west of Shiraz)

was the first royal residence of Achaemenians in the Empire period.

At the beginning of the formation of the Empire, Darius chose Susa for his capital. This was an old Elamit city devastated in the mid-seventh century B.C. by Assyrians. Geographical advantages, helping Susa to become a favourable capital city of the Empire, were as follows: its proximity to Mesopotamia, the navigable river of Karoon leading to the Persian Gulf (the key route to the Indus river and India) and the accessibility of Susa to Pars hinterland.

On the Eamnite Acropolis stood the Citadel: to the north of it were the royal palaces and south of these two was the town. These three areas were surrounded by a great defensive wall. At the foot of the wall a moat was dug.<sup>20</sup> Excavators of this old city have focused mainly on the royal palaces. Latest excavation reports recognize settlements in Susa from 4000 B.C. up to the mediaeval period (9th or 10th century A.D.).<sup>21</sup> The Achaemenian period, however, is the most outstanding one. Apparently no detailed attention is paid to the Achaemenian city as a whole. Although there have been studies of the site (the Citadel, Royal Palaces and the Town), the spatial characteristics of the town and its relationships with the 'Ville Royal'<sup>22</sup> has not been studied. The important point,



however, is that an ancient city of the Achaemenian era can be sketched. The three distinctive parts seem to have been the essential elements of the city. The Royal Quarter dominated the city, but, the town - an organically developed permanent human settlement having the ability of reproducing itself, appearing at a certain stage of social development - was the decisive element on which the city stood. This combination, with some minor alterations, was the pattern of Archaic Iranian cities.

Three overland routes connected Susa to Persepolis, the famous capital of the Achaemenian Empire.<sup>23.</sup>

Construction of the palace of Persepolis started before the one at Susa was finished,<sup>24.</sup> without abandoning Pasardadae, Persepolis was in the heart of Achaemenians' native land, Pars. According to its inscriptions, the construction of Persepolis took at least the years 518 to 460 B.C. Here again, the royal complex is built on a terrace on the mountain-side. A projecting slope is levelled and artificially extended. On its east side, the terrace leans against the rock; the three other sides are free. A wall almost 16 m. (50 ft) high, enclosed it on all its sides.<sup>25.</sup>

There are different suggestions about the nature of Persepolis.<sup>26.</sup> All the archaeological studies and historical documents make one believe that Persepolis has been a royal quarter (political centre) and not a city.<sup>27.</sup>

Therefore its pattern, which shows relationships of inner

royal quarter elements, is not representative of any city.

### HELLENISTIC INFLUENCE

Alexander signalized the end of the Achaemenian Empire by burning the principal capital, Persepolis, previously unknown to the Greeks.<sup>28</sup> Colonization of regions followed the conquest. Greeks and Macedonians settled in the conquered lands. Therefore, their sources do not report merely facts of military history, but may provide other data with equal ease. During that period many towns and cities were either founded or developed in Asia. The influence of Graeco-Macedonian urban life and urban culture, however, was more significant in western parts of the old Empire (Asia minor). Few cities are known to be founded by Macedonians: they usually carried names such as Alexandria or Seleucia. Forghana\* is supposed to be the most eastern Hellenic city ever built.<sup>29</sup> Other towns attributed to the Greeks were either expanded old settlements, garrisons and citadels, or new urban centres (usually for commercial purposes).

The transfusion of population and, with it, cultural values, affected mainly the western districts. The system of city-state expanded in western districts of the previous empire (Asia Minor, Syria and Mesopotamia). Seleucia was built on the Tiger with a substantial Greek population.

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\* Known as "Alexandria Margiana" at the time of Seleucids, is in a valley named Forghana on the River Syr (Syr Darya), for a time on the silk route.

There were also numbers of Macedonians and Greeks in other cities of the region living under new judicial rules. These were favourable conditions for the expansion of commercial activities.

Occupied regions had to be controlled to ensure adequate supplies of food, ammunition, horses, etc. for the army and gold to meet the expenses. "In the organization of his Graeco-Eastern power Alexander generally acted in accordance with Persian customs and tradition".<sup>30</sup> This can mean that the class structure of the Iranian society, to a large extent, remained unchanged.

Urban development at this period was mainly under the influence of trade. There were trade routes connecting economic poles located on the two sides of Iran: China and India on the East; Asia-Minor, Greece and, later, Rome on the West. The most well-known of those routes was the Silk Route.

During the previous half millenium further development of the social division of labour had resulted in the dawn of social classes. Separation of agricultural and non-agricultural labour had led to the division of town and village.

During the Achaemenian Empire direct dominance of the central government was also practised in some of the commercial western cities of the Empire. Merchants,

traders and even transit merchandise, and also urban craftsmen, were subject to heavy tributes.<sup>31</sup> The Greek concept of urban autonomy had no place in Iranian society. King's workshops in the town, or the presence of King's tradesmen, operating on goods known as Royal monopolies, are good indicators showing the dominance of the State (i.e. the Palace) over the economic life of cities.<sup>32</sup> By the introduction of Greek juridical systems into the cities of the western districts their pattern of development changed. On the plateau, however, old practices were continued. According to the inscriptions of Dura-Europos, at the time of Seleucids (in Iran 321 - 250 B.C.), basic tax was Phoros.<sup>33</sup> This type of tribute collection strike cities, villages and people and was paid collectively.<sup>34</sup> It is, however, extremely difficult to draw any conclusion, or assume any generalization, on the basis of documents and inscriptions mostly found in western districts.

Seleucids' domination in Iran was less than a century. Their influence was more on art and literature than on social structure. Apart from some formal alterations, cities followed their own historical development in Iran.

### INDIGENOUS IRANIAN URBAN LIFE

Around the 3rd century B.C. Parthia, then one of the Seleucids provinces, declared independence and

subsequently took over the control of the Iranian plateau.

Social changes at the time of the new state were far more important than those of the 'Hellenistic' period. On this basis, Arroman documents present particularly interesting points.<sup>35</sup> They throw some light on the land tenure system and the relations of ownership. The existence of communal land during the Parthian period is almost certain.<sup>36</sup>

Under the Parthians, once again, the pyramid of power was established. Some changes, however, had taken place. First was the presence of an urban economy, which meant new social groups, economically rather significant. Second, the relationship between central government and Satrap was less rigid and some autonomy was accepted for the Satrap.

The dawn of private landed property was signaled by the growth of urban merchants, a potentially autonomous social class within a paternalistic social structure. The weakness of ties of subordination between the central power and the Satrap, however, can be distinguished as signs of a new social set up. These changes, as a result, created a new urban character. Cities became more significant from the economic point of view.

Analysis of the urban structure of this period needs

the study of the urban society. This latter, however, should be studied as a part of the social totality. Absence of adequate material makes such a work difficult. Maybe that is why Henning calls the Parthian Period 'obscure'.<sup>37.</sup> On the other hand, conclusions drawn by scholars about this period are different. Christensen, and many other historians, discussing the political relationship between the King and his Satraps, as the focal point of the social analysis, conclude : "On this basis, seeds of feudalism attain their development field as soon as the Parthian Empire is formed".<sup>38.</sup> Pigulevskaja, after discussing historical documents and some Roman historians' accounts about the presence of slaves in the Parthian period, tries to establish the existence of slavery relations in that society.<sup>39.</sup>

The presence of loose connections between the central court and Satraps, as well as slaves for domestic work and the army, are well documented. Neither of these, however, is decisive to identify the existence of either feudalism or slavery systems. Despite the ambiguity of the Parthian social structure, accounts and inscriptions enable the investigator to recognize some urban social groups. After the discoveries at Susa aristocracy and its political significance, merchants, with no political influence, are reported.<sup>40.</sup> This group of merchants became more and more significant, especially in western cities, after the development of the Roman Empire.

### Concentration of wealth in Rome and Syria

intensified mercantile relationships of western societies with China and India. The major silk route through Parthia, or regions under Parthian control, gave significant economic importance to the transit mercantile activity. "Parthian Stations". by Isidor of Charax, <sup>41.</sup> names cities, villages and stations between Antiochia (now Anatolia in Turkey), Alexandropolis (near modern Qandahar), or to "Lo-yang" and "Ch'ang-an" in China. <sup>42.</sup> The concentration of places on the western parts of the route as compared with the eastern parts, however, are significant. According to this document, Concohar (most probably Kangavar, near modern Kermanshah) <sup>43.</sup> and Egbatanae (Hamadan) were two big cities of Medes. Isidor reported ten villages and five cities between Egbatanae and Rhagae <sup>44.</sup> (modern Rey, south of Tehran), but he did not name them. He also referred to Rhagae as the greatest of the cities of Medes. <sup>45.</sup> The continuation of this route passed along the northern side of the Alborz range. Parthian cities of Qomis <sup>46.</sup> (east of the modern Damghan), Hecatompiros <sup>47.</sup> (near modern Sabzevar) and Nisa (near the Russian and Iranian border in Russian Turkestan) are all located on the same route. Mountains, providing water for cultivation and human settlements, enabled caravans to follow natural resources. Caravans, on the other hand, helped towns and villages to get involved in barter and exchange their local products.

The outcome of such inter-relationships encouraged the authorities to demand tax and toll and, in return, to ensure caravans' safety when passing through their territory.

There are records of customs houses established in Tigris and Euphrates:<sup>48</sup>. The sea-port of Charax-Spasini (or Charax-Atrabadh) (some seventy Km north-west of Khoramshahr in Khuzestan province of Iran),<sup>49</sup>. near the confluence of the two rivers, is reported as an active commercial port of the 1st century B.C. until the 2nd century A.D.<sup>50</sup>. Debevoise suggested that "Incentive for the development of new routes to avoid Parthia probably arose not from a desire to avoid payment of these duties but from the breakdown of Parthian control along the route".<sup>51</sup>. Here, the paradoxical situation of a centralized state against the mercantile economy, on the one hand, and the merchant on the other hand, is very well shown. Growth of central control of the state produced a potential ability for trade activity to increase. At the same time, its growth suppressed the merchant by restrictions and tax. This suppression lies in the contradiction between the laws of a centralized power seeking total control and the mercantile economy looking for self control.<sup>52</sup>.

Mercantile activities and private landed property in Iran, like many other Asiatic Societies, were introduced long after the establishment of highly centralized and bureaucratic states (between 100 B.C. and 200 A.D.). Under



such circumstances neither the mercantile economy (mainly known as urban economy) nor the private land ownership could take the economic lead without confronting the powerful state. Both of these institutions have been marginal in most of pre-nineteenth century Iranian history.

Tribute, basically collected from agriculture, was the major source of income for the state to meet its large expenditures. This tribute was collected in kind or in cash, based on area of cultivation, on type of crop and also as poll tax.<sup>53</sup> Land surveys and population census were, therefore, necessary and were recorded by official surveyors.<sup>54</sup> The King's control over the forces of production, however, was not confined to the cultivated land. When urban economy developed he established workshops in cities.

#### URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THIRD TO FIFTH CENTURY A.D.

A new phase of urban life was developing on the Iranian plateau. The take-over of a new dynasty with a stronger centralized form in the first half of the Third century A.D. coincided with this process and intensified it. New settlements were established, specially in the south and south-west of the Plateau during the Fourth and Fifth centuries. Newly formed urban settlements were supported and protected by Shahs (Iranian word for King). Populations of these cities were either newly urbanized Iranians or captives of wars with Romans from the western

border. Sources are unanimous in admitting that prisoners were recruited into different occupations in Pars.<sup>55</sup> They were sent into the cities which were built by Sassanians.<sup>56</sup> Many of these prisoners were used in hydraulic constructions, such as 'Bande Geissar' (Caesar's dam), where Valerian (a Roman Emperor) himself is said to have worked.

By the end of the Third century autonomous cities had completely disappeared in western Iran.<sup>57</sup> The new city was a different institution, which was supported and controlled by the central bureaucracy. The type of population living in those cities can be distinguished by studying the financial and judicial documents of the period.

Traditionally there were three social strata known in Iran until the Fifth century A.D.; Priests, Warriors and others. This third group mostly consisted of agriculturists.<sup>58</sup> Only one passage in Avesta (the Holy book of Mazdaism religion) mentioned a fourth group (Hutukhshan) which is known to be 'artisans'. This last group, however, from the social point of view was considered as part of the third strata.

A Sassanian document introduces a new social classification with four categories; Ecclesiastics, Warriors, Bureaucrats and People.<sup>60</sup> Priests and warriors were traditionally, the two upper classes of Iranian society. The third class, or bureaucrats (Dibheran) were a new socially known entity which previously were a part of the

priests' class. The separation of these civil servants from the priests was firstly because of the growth of clerical occupations and the increment of duties which were creating complexity inside the bureaucratic system. Secondly because the political role of religion had become significant enough to need a large nation-wide establishment to control, ideologically manipulate and ensure the social stability of the system. Due to the further divisions of labour and the development of the means of production, especially irrigation systems,<sup>61</sup> agrarian production, crafts and commercial activities were producing enough food and goods to support the ever-increasing materially non-productive groups such as priests and bureaucrats. Ecclesiastic establishments in Iran have always been trying to become economically independent by collecting the revenues of endowments.

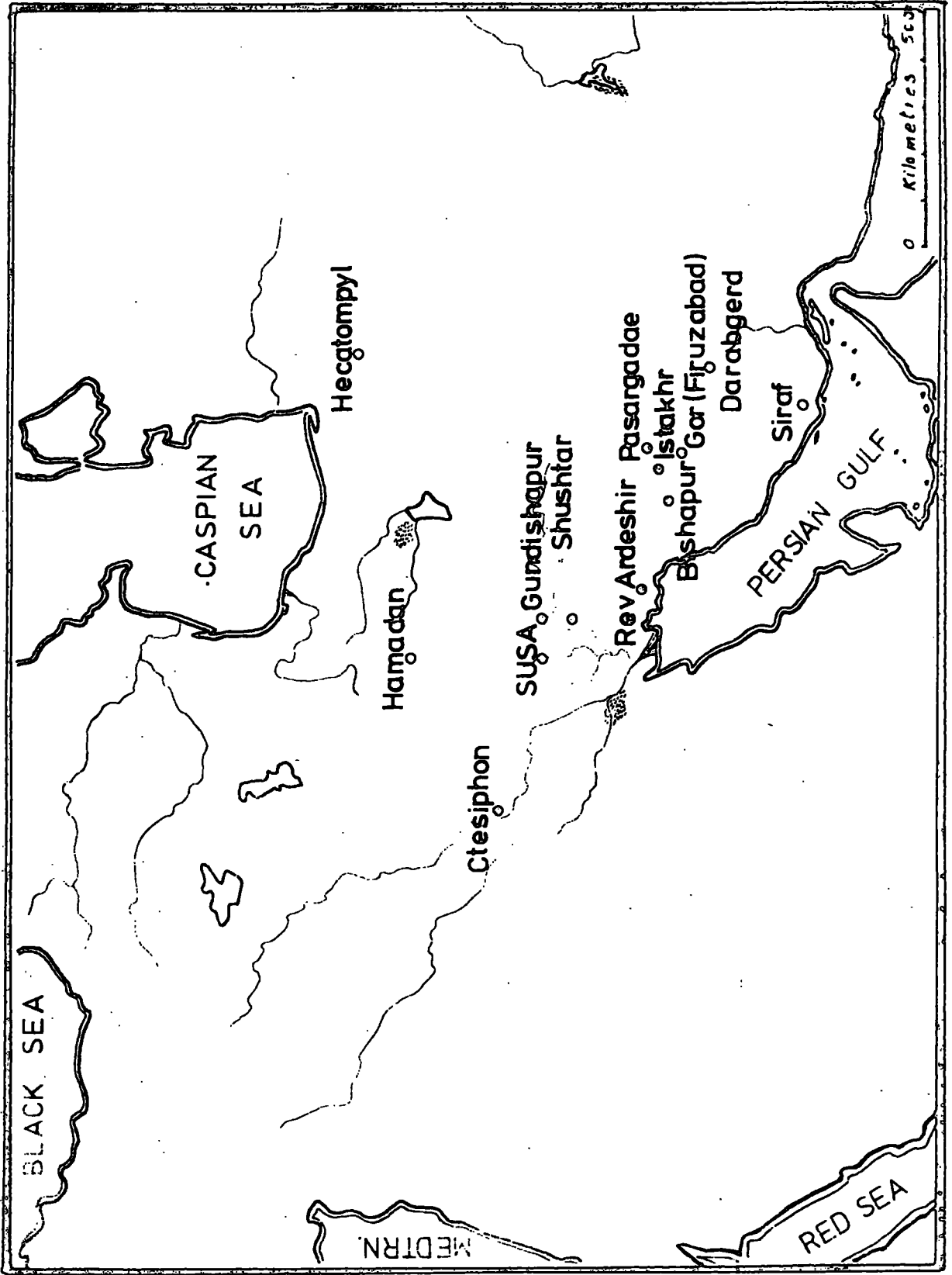
Sassanian rulers, in their attempt to establish a centralized political system, had to demolish any such autonomy by controlling political and economic sources. In a broader sense they had to control economic, ideological and political life. It was not accidental, though, that a church of state was established at this period, under the control of the royal court, and previous priests, who had close relationship with princely estates and local kings, were dismissed. Christensen distinguished two character-

istic features of the Sassanian system :

- (1) strong centralization
- (2) The Church of State. <sup>62.</sup>

Other features of that system were a large bureaucratic set up and rapid urban development. <sup>63.</sup> The third social class, or the bureaucrats, had nine different sub groups ranked in a hierarchic set up. <sup>64.</sup> They were official writers, accountants, reporters, contract writers, etc., who had to be present all over the country. What the new system also wanted was to attract caravans to its homeland, Pars. Therefore suitable trade routes and other facilities were needed. Cities which were built by Sassanians could meet this new need and the construction of a hydraulic infrastructure ensured agrarian production for the populated areas. Social changes and economic expansion of the period originated new cities. Euty chius and Ibn Qutaiba <sup>65.</sup> have reported six cities built by Ardeshir (founder of the Sassanid dynasty). Tabari reported eight <sup>66.</sup> and Hamza gave the names of eleven cities reputedly founded or re-founded by Ardeshir. <sup>67.</sup>

Gor was one of the earliest cities basically built as a political and administrative centre <sup>68.</sup> next to the famous Sassanian palace, Firuzabad. <sup>69.</sup> Bishopur and Rev-Ardeshir <sup>70.</sup> connected Gor to Ram-Hormoz and ultimately to Gondishapur. Ctesiphon and Seleucia were the silk route turned towards the north-east. (see map).



Map No. 5

MAJOR CITIES OF IRAN  
BETWEEN 5th & 7th  
CENTURIES A.D.

The new commercial route to the Persian Gulf, southern India, China and sometimes East Africa created a new economic significance for the land of Pars.

Among the Sassanian cities built to the south of the Iranian plateau, some were sea ports on the Persian Gulf. Siraf is the best example, showing the importance of commercial activity in the Sassanian period.<sup>71</sup> Although the remains of Sassanian Siraf are not enough to interpret the exact urban structure, some features, such as fortress, residential area, area of cultivated land, hydraulic construction, surrounding wall, etc., show that it has had a relatively large population and an articulate urban society.<sup>72</sup> Among the historical writings on Sassanian cities, Hamza referred to "Eight ports on the Gulf or the rivers of Khusistan and Mesopotamia."<sup>73</sup> Although it is difficult to be certain of the exact location of each of those towns and ports without specific archaeological evidence, nevertheless their approximate locations are quite clear. Rapid urban development of the Sassanian period in Iran can be demonstrably recognised as the outcome of the social and economic expansion crystalized in centralized bureaucratic systems and commercial economic activity.

Siraf was a Sassanian settlement with defences more than 1.2 Km across and a fortress commanding the shore.<sup>74</sup> Unfortunately, not many Sassanian cities have

been excavated that might help a comparative study. The location of different urban components, however, would throw some light on their relationships. These are the defensive location of the fortress, the close connection between the fortress and the economic centre (market and workshop) and the centrality of the market.<sup>75</sup> It seems that what is located at the north side of the fortress is surrounded by other urban features. Obviously this is only one interpretation of Sassanian Siraf and it might be inaccurate.

### CHAPTER III

#### EARLY MEDIAEVAL IRANIAN URBAN LIFE

(7th to 9th Centuries)

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#### BEGINNING OF ISLAM

Apart from being a religion, Islam has always been a composition of divine and secular doctrines covering most of the everyday activities of its followers. Because of this very characteristic, Islamic doctrines have been subject to alterations whenever they contradicted social or economic forces during the historical development of Muslim societies. At the beginning, Islam had to respond to the actual needs of the Arab communities, for otherwise it could not be accepted, nor could it spread out. Thus an introduction about the social and economic conditions of Arabia at the time of Islam would be helpful to understand the social nature of this Ideology.

Arabia had a tribal social structure in the 7th century. Extended families belonging to each tribe were engaged in animal husbandry or growing dates around oases. Orchards and corn farming on a small scale also existed in western valleys of the Peninsula. Concepts like government, nation or state were unknown to those people, except for Yemen.<sup>1</sup>

After the expansion of the Sassanian Kingdom in



Persia, which controlled most of the trade routes between east and west, the sea routes through Yeman and Syria were more frequently used by caravans operating between the two areas. Those caravans passed through the two cities of Mecca and Yathrib (Medina). Some Arab families who were involved in trade were becoming wealthy merchants. Mecca and Yathrib were not only Byzantium's entrepot cities, but themselves had also become cities producing their own goods to exchange with the East and West. Mecca was the market place of several tribes who used to come there for pilgrimage every winter. Mecca has been a holy place since long before Islam was introduced to Arabia.<sup>2.</sup>

Social problems in Arabia used to be settled in a reunion of tribes in a confederation form. Decisions were usually made on the basis of tradition, but the lack of a controlling power, where private interests were opposing communal and tribal interests, was manifest.

In c. 572 A.D. Sassanians invaded Yeman and extended their sphere of influence to southern Arabia and its trade routes.<sup>3.</sup> As a result of that invasion, commercial activities throughout Arabia were restricted in favour of the Persian Gulf and trade routes through Persia. Persians reduced the flow of wealth into Arabia, hence intensified the social conflict among the Arabs. This period witnessed the formation of new urban classes. The components of

these new classes were members of the tribal families. Their new social and economic position in the society was in contradiction with their previous status in the tribe and was in conflict with the traditional order of the tribal social structure.<sup>4</sup> Islam, as a new order, was a belief giving room for new social relations to establish themselves.

Historical and geographical characteristics of the society in which Islam was introduced made this religion assume strong secular tendencies. Islamic law was based on a commercial notion. When Muslims conquered Mesopotamia and, later, Persia, most of the existing financial and judicial codes about land tenure systems, tax collection and other agricultural rights were unknown to them. Muslims kept those laws as they were previously operated and later they became part of the Islamic Law in those regions.<sup>5</sup>

### MUSLIM PERSIA

The Persian central government had become weak after the internal social and economic problems and several wars with the Byzantine Empire during the 6th and 7th centuries and had, to a large extent, lost its integrity and was prepared to collapse. Although the religious aspect of Islam was not ineffective in the conquest of Persia by Arabs, nevertheless it was not Islam which conquered

Persia, but Muslim Arabs: those totally devoted believers who had nothing to lose and who were rewarded, dead or alive. Arabs had obtained the material and non-material powers to break their social, economic and geographical obstacles. In other words, Islam was a strong lever to materialize Arabs' potential ability for a rapid social development at the right time.

Simultaneously, after the conquest, a migration of Arabs started towards Persia. Arab settlements developed either inside old cities or as new centres. During the 18 years (633 - 651 A.D.) from their first confrontation with the Persian army in Mesopotamia until the occupation of the north-eastern part of the Iranian plateau (Khorasan), Arabs were settling down in towns and mixing with converted Persians.<sup>6</sup> Some cities in Mesopotamia (Iraq) were basically Arab garrisons in the 7th century (i.e. Basra and Kufa).<sup>7</sup>

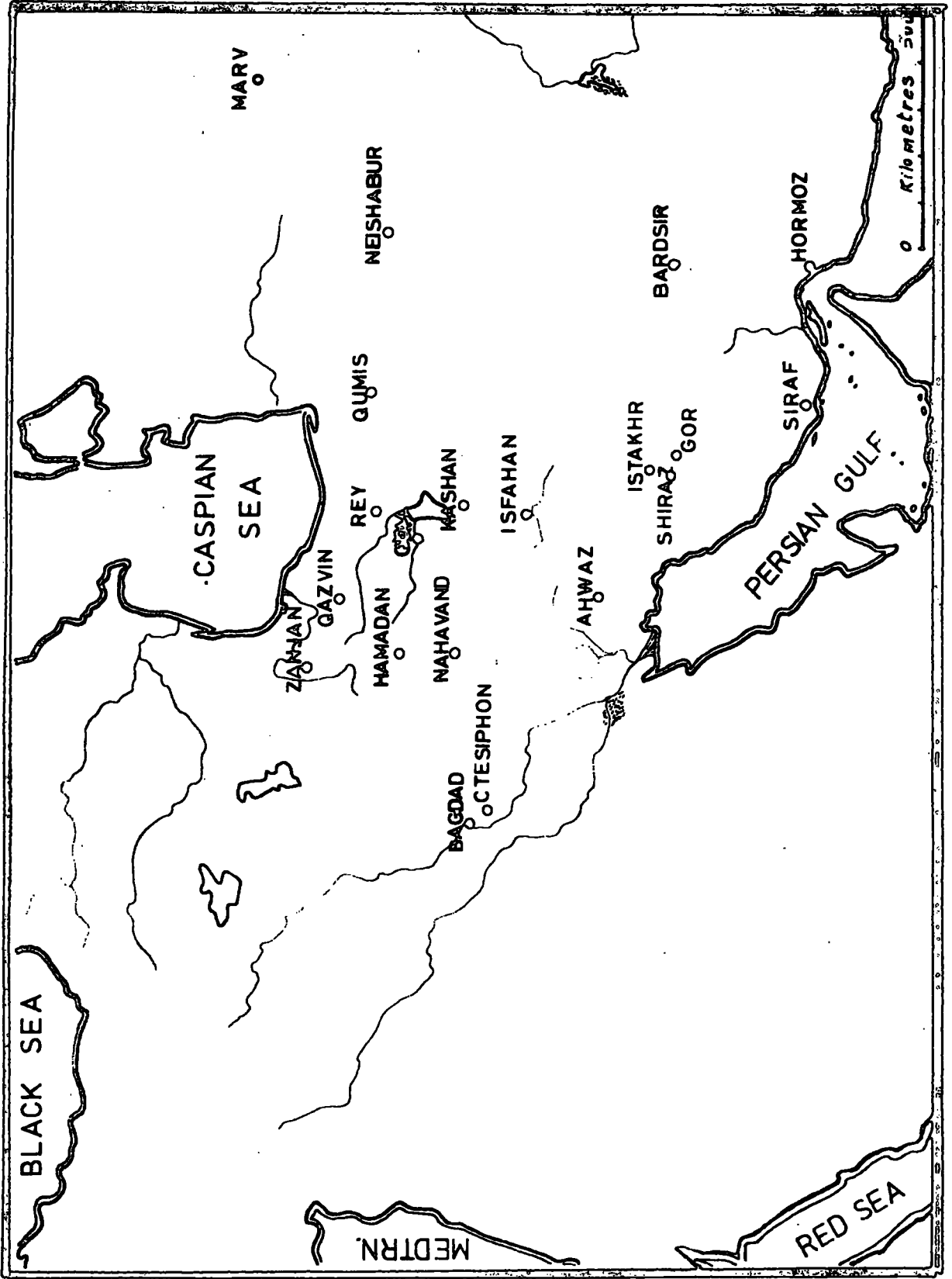
#### CLASSIFICATION OF PERSIAN CITIES IN THE 7th to 9th CENTURIES

(a) By the time of the Arab invasion, chains of settlements had formed along the caravan routes from east to west along the two ranges of Mountains, Alborz, under the Caspian sea, and Zagros, from the north-west to the south-east of the Iranian plateau. This type of town (depending on commercial routes) has always appeared and disappeared in Iran until the modern era. Some of them,

however, due to some special political or geographical situation, have developed as independent (as regards the trade route) urban centres and have continued an uninterrupted life. Some of these latter cities have played important social and economic roles in the Persian history (e.g. Kashan and Neishabur).

(b) The second type of city in Persia at the dawn of Islam were metropolitan centres of the Sassanian kingdom, mostly known as regional capital cities. Those cities, as centres of cultural and financial activities, were melting pots in which different ethnic groups, languages and religions were mixed and had produced a highly developed urban culture. The presence of Metropolitan Nestorian bishops<sup>8</sup> in Rev-Ardeshir, Gundishapur and Seleucia in the 7th century is good evidence of the importance of Christianity in those cities, as well as of their status. Knowing that Christians of Persia were mostly Armenians, Syrians and people of Asia Minor, one can realize the cultural value of such metropolitan centres.

The self-sufficient character of agrarian societies in Persia did not allow medium size towns to appear as local market places. The only type of such economic centres, before the introduction of a market economy, were developed as exchange centres in relation to nomadic tribes. Jean Aubin calls them 'ville paturage'.<sup>9</sup> Those cities, however,



Map No. 6

MAJOR CITIES OF IRAN  
AT THE TIME OF THE  
ARAB CONQUEST AND  
OF THE ARAB EMPIRE

did not appear before the Mediaeval period of Persian History and are discussed in Chapter IV.

### URBAN TOPOGRAPHY\*

To discuss the topography of ancient cities an analysis of their remains is needed. On the other hand, 'Urban Archaeology' is a very young branch of archaeology and is not developed yet as a separate science.

Apart from what is done on Siraf<sup>10</sup>, there are no other analytical approaches to the Sassanian and early Islamic period cities identifying urban spaces. The task of most of the archaeologists is to look for individual buildings, coins, objects, architectural styles, tomb stones, etc. It is, therefore, difficult to verify early Persian and Arab historians' accounts with archaeological facts.

According to aerial photographs and general excavations, some of the Sassanian cities are known to have had a geometrical enclosure, quadrangular or circular, such as Gor, Hamadan, Darabjird, Jay (Isfahan) etc. It is generally known that rectangular city planning is a Greek tradition and has been transferred as a style to Persia.<sup>11</sup> This so-called style of planning was also used

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\* "Topography" is used here after Aubin to describe the "Spatial System" of a city or the location of urban spaces and their mode of articulation.

by Romans and Byzantines. Ghirshman suggested that circular planning was a Persian tradition and the use of it after the Greeks, during the Parthians and later the Sassanians, was a revival of Persian tradition.<sup>12.</sup>

However, archaeological surveys have uncovered a very important fact. Cities with quadrangular enclosure had an essential difference with those having a circular one. The external wall of a so-called quadrangular city was usually an additional wall immediately outside the built up area, dividing it from an outside, unbuilt area. The round wall usually covered both an internal, built up area (the city) and an internal, unbuilt space. The best examples of these two types of cities are 'Eivan Karkheh' (in north Khuzestan) and 'Gor' (in Fars, later called Firuzabad).<sup>13.</sup> After what has been said one can conclude that classification of Iranian cities according to their enclosure, which is often done, does not represent any urban characteristic. One has to conclude that the circular wall protected the city and its immediate surroundings from an external enemy whereas the enclosure of the city proper was only a protection for the built up area. Examples of such enclosures can be seen even today in rural settlements, which are called Qal'a. What is important, though, is that the unconstructed land, which later joined the city, was by no means a waste land. In fact it was quite active to produce the immediate and everyday food for the city and also it was where the

underground water canals appeared and supplied the city. The reason for different defensive systems, which later became more complicated, was the different nature of the enemies of the city.

### DEFENSIVE FACTOR

Cities of the Iranian plateau, especially those located on the east side, were subject to two kinds of attack. First, at the time of the collapse of the central power and invasion of the country by foreign powers (Greeks, Arabs, Mongols, etc.) Second, at the time of regional attacks by tribes of nomads or rebellious governors. According to the purpose of any attack to the city the target would change. Nomad's targets were mostly armaments and horses. Foreign armies, however, were looking for wealth and slaves. This might be a crude generalization and it is clear that such a sharp division could not exist; but the defensive system of Iranian cities has affected its topography to the extent that some kind of internal fortification appeared inside the city during the middle ages. Therefore distinguishing between different kinds of attack can be helpful. On this basis, 'Enemies' of Iranian cities can be divided into two groups - foreign or general, local or immediate.

It is suggested that Iranian towns were surrounded



by a rampart after the disturbed years of the 11th century A.D.<sup>14</sup>. Construction of ramparts, however, was frequently used long before the middle ages. The Sassanian site of "Qal'a Gabri", near Varamur, some 60 Km south-east of Tehran, has got a rectangular enclosure with an approximate width of 5 m. at the bottom and 2 m. at the top. There are other examples as well, such as Marv and Shiz. Ramparts were usually used to protect the "Qal'a" (citadel, in Persian 'Dizh' or Diz) (known in 9th and 11th century A.D. literature as 'Kohandizh' or 'Qohandizh').<sup>15</sup> Qal'a became the well protected section of the city in which treasury, the army and the governor were located. The total urban area, which consisted of 'Dizh', 'Shahrestan'<sup>\*</sup> and 'Rabadh',<sup>\*\*</sup> (or Rabaz) was enclosed within a wall. Shahrestan, which was the constructed civil part of the city, usually surrounded the Qal'a - i.e. Dizh. Although this type of urban morphology applies to some cities of the early Islamic period, however, more empirical evidence is needed to accept it as the general urban type in Iran of that period.

### ISLAMIC LAW

For almost half a century after their conquest Arabs

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\* Shahrestan : the built up area of a city, the civilian part or the residential area.

\*\* Rabadh : exterior, outskirts, the immediate surrounding land of the Shahrestan or of the Dezh.

made almost no change in the metrological and monetary systems of Persia.<sup>16</sup> Other financial regulations, like tax collecting systems, were not only unchanged but were absorbed by the Islamic Law.<sup>17</sup> These rules were changed only when a corresponding Islamic law existed. Economic laws of Islam, being on a commercial basis, could well cover economic activities at the urban level. For rural areas, however, Arabs were confronted with a complex system of land holding relationships.

Two points are important to notice when studying the effects of Arabs and Islam on Iran. First, Arabs had entered a world historically more developed than their own. Second, "they came not to destroy but to exploit".<sup>18</sup> Having said this, it is comprehensible why at many stages they found it reasonable to use a system already operating and to compromise with a practical, non-Islamic institution. This was the case with monetary, metrological, tax and land holding systems.

The adoption of Islam as a way of life to the conquered land's previous traditions did not only happen to Iran. A similar process went on in occupied parts of Byzantine as well. In a sense, Islam in each Muslim society was the combination of the pre-Islamic culture of that society and Islamic doctrines. This aspect of Islam made this religion more like a political ideology of a state, at least during the time of the prophet and

his two immediate successors, Abubakr and Omar. The result, however, was the reinforcement of the secular and divine aspect of this religion as a single totality and its use as an ideology at the economic, social and political level by the state. This unification of divine and secular life affected the life of Muslims and became present in every institution of the Muslim society. The city, as the first base of this new ideology, was in the front row of this change.

#### TOWN AND CITY AT THE TIME OF THE ISLAMIC EMPIRE

The oversimplistic doctrines of the Islamic State (i.e. religious rulership) was in an unstable position from its very beginning. After the expansion of the Islamic domain, the Islamic State was transformed to the Arab kingdom. The machinery of the government was rapidly organized to run the State. The Imam gave place to the Caliph. Social classes developed on the basis of economic exploitation, unequal distribution of wealth and social discrimination.<sup>19.</sup> Islamic doctrines of social justice and equality were adapted to new social conditions.<sup>20.</sup>

The introduction of Islam to the Iranian plateau took place relatively slowly. The new religion first entered the western cities (634 A.D.), crossed the Zagros mountains (640 A.D.), went north towards Zanjan, Qazvin,

Rey and Qumis (642 A.D.), and then down south towards central cities, Qom, Kashan and Isfahan (644 A.D.).

Later, Arabs went towards Pars and the cities of Gor and Istakhr (649 A.D.). Occupation of the plateau was completed by 651 A.D. Some parts of Iran, such as Deylam, Tabaristan<sup>21</sup> and Kabul, however, were never captured by Arabs. The Arabs move towards northern Iran and the cities of Zanjan, Qazvin, Rey and Qumis, after crossing the Zagros, was not accidental. Although the capital of the Sassanian kingdom was Istakhr, in the south of the plateau, Arabs were heading towards the north to control the silk route and capture wealthy cities.

There was a difference in the nature of expansionism of Islam during the first two Caliphs and the rest of them. The first period was loaded with a strong ideology which drove Muslims - mainly Arabs - towards an ideal, 'just' society.

The second period appeared as the result of the first one. After Omar, the second Caliph, the Islamic state was transformed into an Arab state. Symptoms of kingship and a bureaucratic state, with its expansionist behaviour due to the accumulation of wealth and land in the hands of Arabs, are well documented.

Among the effects of Islamization, the most important change in the Persian urban structure was the introduction of the mosque as the centre of ideology and

policy. Mosques either occupied the best building of the city, which usually had been a political or a military building, or they were built at the centre of the town in such a way that they replaced a city's most important building.<sup>22</sup> In either case, mosques took the place of the previous city centres and were both social and political centres. Governors of a city were usually the religious leaders - Imam - as well. This fact gave a special character to the mosque in Iranian cities in their early Islamic history.

The other factor changing the structure of Iranian cities in that period was the mass migration of Arabs into the Iranian plateau. They developed settlements either within or beside existing cities, or established new towns. The best example of a new city built by Arabs is Shiraz in Pars province.<sup>23</sup>

The process of urban change, however, took a long time to complete. The main reason for this was the unsettled social structure of Iranian society between the 7th and 10th centuries.

After the collapse of the previous centralized autocracy, most parts of the Iranian plateau became tributary states of the Arab Empire. Governors of those states were appointed by Caliphs. At first those Governors were chosen from among the Arabs, but after less than a

century local rebellions appeared as a threat to Bagdad, at that time capital of the Empire. As a result, those parts were left to local governors and Bagdad only collected the tribute. Even this did not last long and in less than two centuries the Caliph of Islam lost his political significance and became only a religious character to the Iranian Muslims. This, however, was the objective outcome of the process of separation of secular and divine aspects of Islam in Iran. By the end of the 9th century seeds of Iranian states were germinating in Khorassan, Sistan and Tabarestan, the fruit of which was the establishment of the Buyid dynasty in the 10th century.

Once, again, most parts of the Plateau were unified under one government. This unification enabled the central government to have access to the revenue of the whole country. On the other hand, to control and secure the revenue the central government had to have a bureaucratic system and a large army, which again were costly.

The 10th century society of Iran was an agrarian society based on self-sufficient agricultural units operating within a tributary system where land was mainly controlled by the government and partly given to military commanders, or viziers, to collect the revenue as their salaries: or it was given to appointed governors against

a fixed yearly revenue. There were also parts of the country which were operated by the government itself. Unlike mediaeval European feudalism, Iranian sovereigns were not dependent on a landed aristocracy.<sup>24.</sup>

This was the type of society in which mediaeval towns and cities of Iran were formed and developed. Two basic factors have clearly affected those cities : commercial activities; and the presence of governors, officials, military men etc. in the city. Commercial activities could basically be divided into two categories; internal and transitional. In those cities located on major caravan routes, like Kashan, Kerman, Neishabur etc. the size of this transit flow was sometimes so great that a large section of the city was occupied by service spaces for the caravans.

Cities of the 10th and 11th centuries in Iran consisted of three distinguishable sections: Kohandezh, Shahrestan and Rabaz. Kohandezh,<sup>25.</sup> or, as Arabs called it, Qohandez, was a walled and protected area in which treasury, prison, military base and, sometimes, a governor's seat or a mosque were located. Sharestan, or, as in some scripts, Sharestan, was the town proper, or the residential area and had an enclosure. Rabaz (exterior, outskirts, suburb) could be the outskirts of either of the previous parts. Kohandezh and Shahrestan were usually connected to each other. There are a few examples where Kohandezh and Shahrestan stand separately

beside each other, in which case they share a large Rabaz, such as the case of Neishabur at the end of the 10th century.

Ibn-Hugal, <sup>26.</sup> an Arab geographer of the 10th century, wrote - "Neishabur is called 'Abar Shahr' - (Metropolis). The city is located on flat land and all its buildings are made of mud. This is a large city which covers an area of about one farsakh by one farsakh.\* In Neishabur there is the seat of the Governor, Kohandezh and Rabaz; all are in a good shape". It seems that by that time the Rabaz of Neishabur had been so important that Ibn-Hugal has not mentioned the Shahrestan (the town) at the beginning of his description.

"The Jame' Mosque \*\* (the Comprehensive Mosque) stood in the Rabaz and faced the public square called Al-Mu'askar, (the Garrison of military reviewing ground). Adjacent thereto was the palace of the governor, which opened on another square called Maidan-al-Husaynein, and not far from this was the prison. All three buildings stood within 1.5 Km of each other." Separation of Kohandezh and Shahrestan, which was a peculiarity of Neishabur, becomes clear when the text continues.

"Kohandezh was outside the Shahrestan. The

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\* Farsakh - measure of length about 6 Km.

\*\* Also known as Jom'e Mosque, or the Friday Mosque.



Rabaz, lying beyond and around both the Kohandezh and Shahrestan, where the great markets were situated, had many gates."

Remembering that Mosques were built in the most important sector of cities, it becomes clear that in the case of Neishabur it was due to the bazaar (market place) that the Mosque was in the Rabaz.

"The most famous market places were those known as Al-Murabba'a-al-Kabirah and Al-Murabba'a-al-Saghirah (the great quadrangle and the little quadrangle) of which the great quadrangle was near the Jame' Mosque. The little quadrangle was at some distance from the other, in the western part of the Rabaz. near the governor's palace."

Further information about the bazaar of Neishabur reveals two major facts. First is that the development of the market place in the Rabaz was the case of the attraction of the Mosque to the Rabaz. Second, after studying the detailed descriptions of Neishabur given by Ibn-Hugal it becomes clear that such a widespread commercial activity could not possibly have been for the satisfaction of the needs of just one city, i.e. Neishabur.

"A long line of streets flanked by shops went from one quadrangle to the other ... In these market streets were many hostels for the merchants and every sort of merchandise might be found, each in a separate mart, while

cobblers, clothiers, bootmakers and men of every trade were abundantly represented."

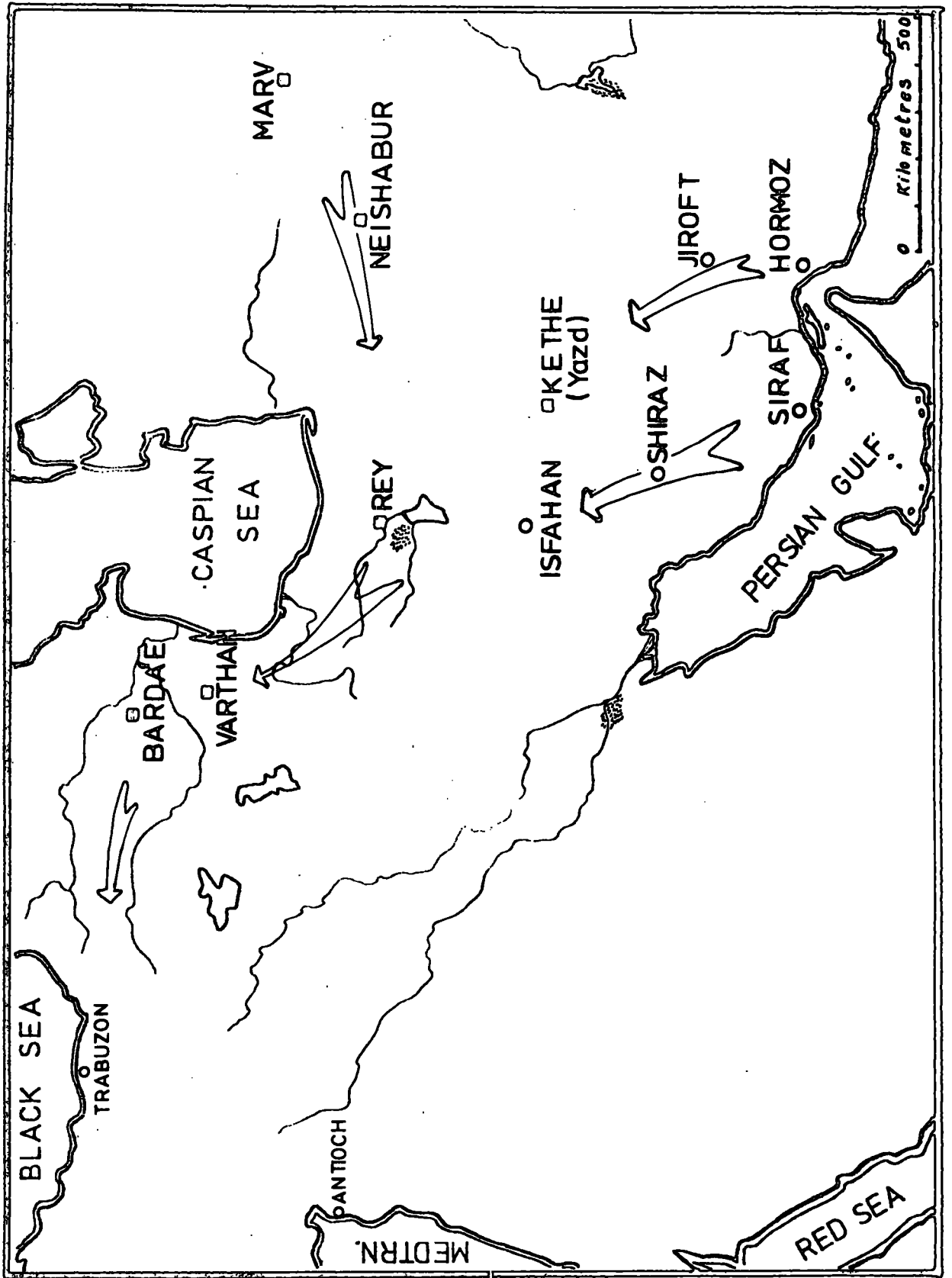
The new type of division in cities (against the previous Kohandezh, Shahrestan and Rabaz), which became more and more visible from the 10th century onwards, was started before the development of Persian society was interrupted by the Arab invasion. After the society returned to relative stability, cities continued their development. Islam, as a new ideology and a subject or factor, was in fact quite effective in reshaping the morality and beliefs.

As was said earlier, Islamic law was remoulded and adapted where the actual conditions of production were in favour of the state. Development of trade, however, was an old process which was intensified as the result of unification of a large area under one centre and the relative stability of the society. There is some historical evidence showing that the process of structural change in Iranian cities had started before the introduction of Islam.

By investigating Iranian cities 300 years after Islam was introduced into Iran it can be seen that the mosque in some of the most important and prosperous cities was built in the Rabaz (exterior). To answer the question why did they go out of the Shahrestan (town proper) and not even stay by the Kohandezh (fortress), some factors should be taken into consideration. First, as has already

been said, mosques occupied the most important part and even the most important building of the city. On the other hand, bazaars were always developed either by the gates of a city or outside the Shahrestan as a further development of a city. The presence of the Jame' mosque in the Rabaz, however, explains the presence of the bazaar, or the economic focus of the city outside the town proper before the introduction of the mosque. Therefore it becomes possible to assume that the transformation of cities from their early Sassanian structure to their mediaeval type had started before the introduction of Islam. By following early Arab and Persian historians and geographers it becomes clearer what type of cities were subject to this change (see Table I).

Most of the important cities of the 'land of Islam' are reported by Ibn-Hugal and Esakhri,<sup>27</sup> either as political capitals of provinces or as centres of districts. Those which are reported as commercial centres with large bazaars mostly have their bazaars in the Rabaz: among them, Neishabur and Marv in Greater Khorassan, Kethe' (old name of Yazd), Varthan on the river Arax, Rey a few miles south of Tehran and Barda' in Azarbaijan, where the river Arax turns south to meet the river Kura (see Map 7). There are other cities the bazaars of which are reported to be large and prosperous (e.g. Isfahan and Balkh) but not located in the Rabaz. In the case of Isfahan, this city consisted of two separate parts, Shahrestan and Yahudiye (Jewish quarter),



Map No. 7.

MEDIAEVAL CITIES OF IRAN  
 LOCATED ON THE EAST-WEST  
 TRADE ROUTES

□ CITIES HAVING THEIR  
 JAME MOSQUE IN THEIR  
 RABAZ

both of them prosperous. There is no report of traditional urban division (Qohandezh-Sharessan-Rabaz) in Isfahan. Balkh is reported as the city of Bamian district, itself part of greater Khorassan province, and seems to have been in its early developing period in the 10th century A.D. Its Rabaz only covered three quarters of the town's (Sharestan's) periphery. Its Jame' mosque and bazaars were inside the Shahrestan. An interesting case of urban development in Iran after the introduction of Islam was the city of Marv. There were three Jame' mosques in Marv reported by both the 10th century geographers, Ibn Hugal and Estakhri. The oldest one, inside the Shahrestan, was built at the beginning of the introduction of Islam. The second mosque (which in the 10th century was called the old mosque) was built later, outside the gate of the Shahrestan but very close to the gate. The third mosque, however, was built in the Rabaz as part of a complex of public places (baths, caravanserais, public open spaces, rest houses etc.) and the bazaar. This new complex was built when Marv became the seat of Khorassan's governor (8th century A.D.).

The bringing of this urban growth out of the enclave gave a new meaning to the Rabaz (outskirts) which was once used for occasional markets, games, religious ceremonies etc. The Rabaz had become an alive and active part of the city, giving room to the most dynamic part of the city, the bazaar. The economic dynamism of trade, as compared

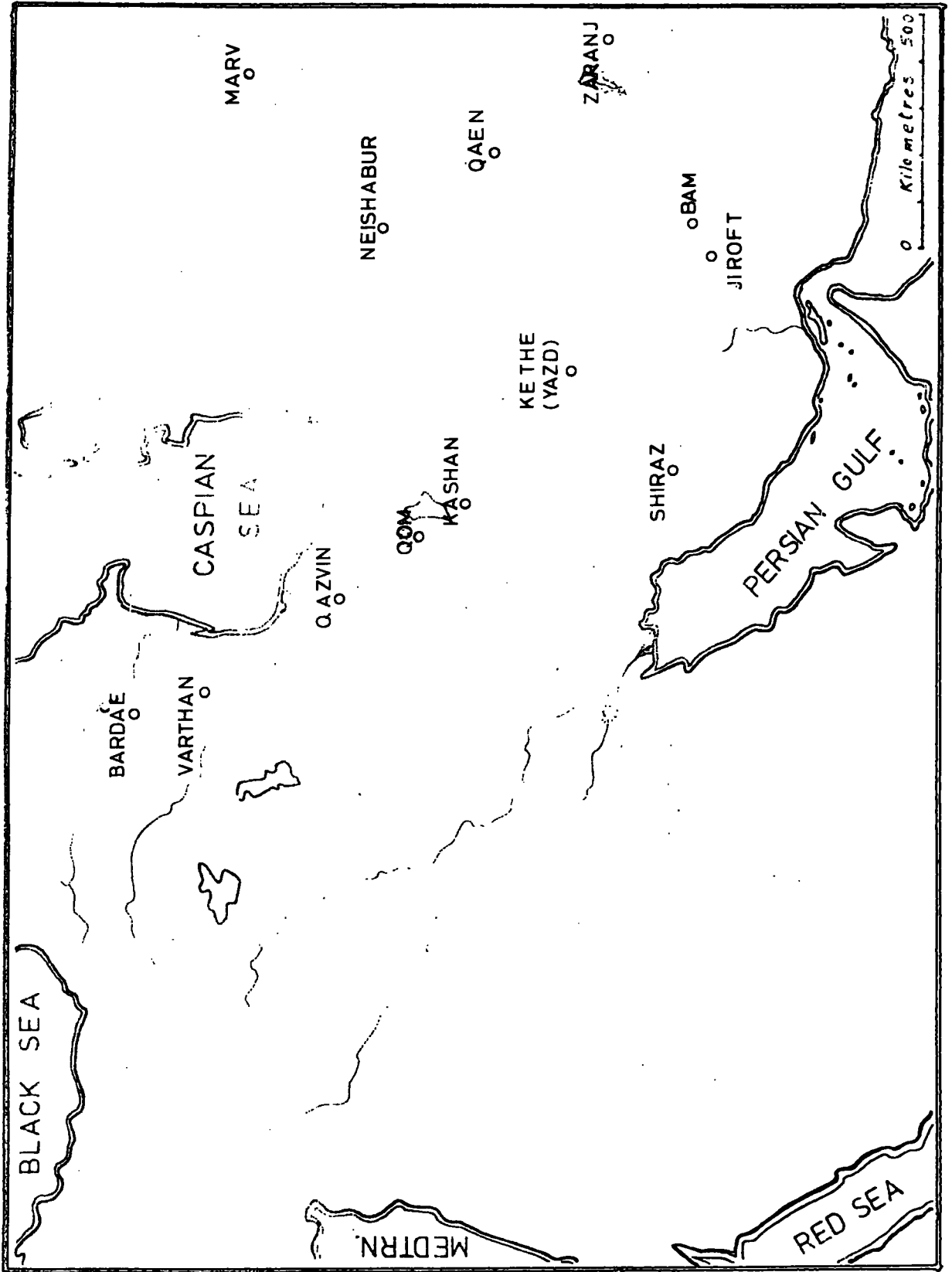
TABLE 1

Cities of the Iranian Plateau: reported by 10th and 11th century geographers.

Name of the town or city	Regional location		The situation of urban division, condition and location of major urban components		
	District	Province	Dezh or Qale	Sharesan or Shahrestan	Rabaz
Zaranj	-	Sistan	?	Jame mosque	Council house
Qaen	Qohestan	Khorasan	The Jame mosque & council house	?	?
Balkh	Bamian	Khorasan	?	Jame in the middle of the Sharesan	Beautiful covering 3 sides of the city
Marv		Khorasan	Very large but ruined	First Jame at the begining of Islam	2nd Jame at the gate 3rd + the Bazaar complex
Kabol			very strong	Residence of muslims	Jews & others
Neishabur	Neishabur		Out of the Town having two gates	Having four gates	Jame Bazaars
Kethe (Yazd)	Yazd	Fars	With strong ramparts	Condition not reported	Bazaar
Shiraz		Fars	No ramparts, no Qale	No division reported Centre of Divan, army, tax books etc.	

Name of the town or city	Regional location		The situation of urban division, condition and location of major urban components		
	District	Province	Dezh or Qale	Sharesan or Shahrestan	Rabaz
Qazvin		Jebal	?	Jame mosque. Two walled Shahrestans	?
Qom		Jebal	?	Walled with fortifications	
Kashan		Jebal	-	This has not been a city of importance.	-
Rey	On the fringe of Jebal & Deylam		Beautiful Qale	Old city and its rampart are ruined. The new city is out of the old one' site. Jame	8 Bazaars in 8 areas
Bam		Kerman	Very Strong	The two mosques Khavarej and Ahl-e-Sonnat in the city, no Rabaz reported.	
Jiroft		Kerman	?	It seems to be a spread city or a linear type with a length of c 2 miles	?
Varthan	(On the river Aras)	Azarbaijan	Strong rampart	Plenty of guest houses	Well known Bazaar
Bardae	Arran & sometimes Azarbaijan			The governor's seat is reported to be next to the mosque, location unknown	Bazaars

SOURCES: Ibn Hugal, "Surat-al-Ard", end of 10th century A.D.  
 Istakhri, "Masalik va Mamalik", end of 10th century A.D.  
 Ibn Faqih, "Al-Boldan", mid 10th century A.D.  
 (For the location of the cities see the following map)



Map No. 8

LOCATION OF MAJOR CITIES  
OF 10th & 11th CENTURIES



with agrarian economy, had given a leading role to the bazaar. The morphology of cities of the Iranian plateau had started to change according to the new economic activities.

### CITIES BUILT IN IRAN AFTER THE ARAB CONQUEST

There are cities built by Arabs in conquered lands (especially in Mesopotamia and its western districts). Very few cities in the Iranian plateau are reported to have had Arab origins. The best known of these is the city of Shiraz.

There are morphological differences between Shiraz, as reported by the previously named 10th century geographers, and other Persian cities. By studying Ibn-Hugal and Istakhri<sup>28</sup>. this point becomes clear.

"They call Shiraz an Islamic City for it was established as an army camp by the Army of Islam near Istakhr. After Istakhr was conquered, Shiraz was built as a city."

After becoming an established settlement, however, Shiraz had to develop as a city and provide the requirements of urban life to its inhabitants. This city remained as the political centre of the province until the time of Ibn-Hugal (almost 300 years). What is interesting is the economic situation of Shiraz in the Fars province, which seems to

have been a mere consumer.

"Food and provisions were taken to Shiraz from other districts and no products were taken out of it."<sup>29</sup>

The political role of Shiraz, on the other hand, was significant.

"Shiraz was the centre of the military forces and functionaries of the province. All the records, tax books and financial documents were kept in Shiraz."

The urban morphology of this city in the 10th century was different compared to other conventional cities of the Iranian plateau.

"The circumference of Shiraz is about one Farsakh (c. 6 Km.) and it does not have any wall surrounding it. Buildings are irregular and squeezed into each other."<sup>30</sup>

Knowing that the reason for the presence of the wall around a town was to secure the 'inside' from the 'outside' (as a purely geographical distinction) its absence in the case of Shiraz in the 10th century can be considered as the lack of such necessity. The reason for this, most possibly, was the absence of an external threat in that period. Shiraz, as a political centre without any major economic significance, could hardly be a target.

## CHAPTER IV

### MEDIAEVAL TOWN AND CITIES OF THE IRANIAN PLATEAU

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Apart from the economic significance of commercial activities, political division of the country and the type of Rulership was quite important in the spatial distribution of cities on the Iranian plateau.

The Independence of Iranian land from the Islamic Empire started from Khorassan, the north-eastern part of the country. As early as the mid-eighth century A.D. (mid 2nd H) local governors, heads of the army and heads of the local communities started to reduce their ties with Bagdad (centre of the eastern Islamic Empire). This movement towards independence in Eastern districts resulted in the establishment of several local and regional kingdoms. Turks, either as heads of local communities or as commanders of the army recruited by Caliphs, had a significant position in these movements.

According to their tribal structure and their nomadic way of life, Turks were distinguished from settled communities in two respects. First was the existence of a simple political organization and second the potential military power.

The nomadic way of life with its major production

based on animal husbandry needed cavalry to take care of the flocks. On the other hand, a nomadic society, due to its mode of everyday life, required an organization enabling quick decision-making. The ability of rapid mobilization, as compared with settled communities, gave a superiority to the nomadic life at times of unrest.

Independent states of the north-east and, later, eastern and central parts of Iran were ruled by local kings, who enjoyed their economic and political autonomy. The only link connecting them to Bagdad was the religious role of the Caliph as the leader of the Muslims. Three out of six main local kingdoms were of Turkish origin. During the period mid-eighth century to the end of the 10th century A.D. eastern parts of Iran were politically divided. The cities of Khorassan<sup>1</sup> (e.g. Neishabur and Bokhara) were either political or economic centres for their regions. As a result of the political disintegration of eastern Iranian provinces, caravan routes were less frequently used, but they were not totally abandoned. The presence of small and local political powers was not necessarily followed by the interruption of the commercial life of cities. What was important for urban economic life was, in fact, the stability of suitable relations under which processes of production and distribution took place.

To understand the nature of cities of Iran under those circumstances a short discussion of some aspects of the system and economic conditions of mediaeval Iran is

necessary.

The relatively stable social relations and economic principles which prevailed in Iran at that period was accompanied by the development of a powerful state. The State maintained social stability by means of ideological and coercive state apparatuses which were supplied mainly from the agricultural surplus. Dispersion of productive land and its relatively low productivity, leading to the tendency of strong states towards expansionism, made them become both large and centralized.

As a result of controlling vast areas and their revenues, civil and military occupations were needed. The enlargement of such a system resulted in over-exploitation of resources and an increase of conflict between the central authority and the provincial rulers.<sup>2</sup> In this period of its history the peasant, who was the main producer, was squeezed by the intermediary group as well as by the Palace. He was exploited without being given the relative security under which he could reproduce himself. Thus the relationship between the producer of goods and food and the producer of security and ideology was turned into conflict. In other words, the state failed to secure conditions under which agricultural production could guarantee the survival of the peasant and the provision of necessary surplus to the central government. As a result, the relationship between the two major social

classes (peasantry and the Palace) was cut by the presence of intermediary groups of viziers, Amirs, bookkeepers, messengers, heads of militia groups and clerks and bureaucrats, inevitably grown alongside the centralized large state. Here, the real contradiction was between the overlord, the King of Kings (in mediaeval Iran known as Sultan) and his organization, necessary to manage a large central autocracy. The result of this, however, was the destruction of the forces of production. On this basis Iranian history has known many occasions of peasants' mass migration from their villages,<sup>3</sup> and the abandonment of fields and gardens, or water resources and irrigation systems. Disintegration of the country into small kingdoms was the last part of this process, or the beginning of a new one. It was during this period of decline that cities suffered most. This was when agrarian production did not produce substantial quantities of surplus. Hence it was the city's turn to pay the toll. On such occasions cities lost what they had collected and accumulated during the period of social stability. In other words, what could potentially lead to the development of the forces of urban production were lost. These interruptions have been repeated throughout Iranian history under different circumstances.

The transitional period of north-eastern, northern and, later, eastern and central cities of Iran (7th to 10th centuries A.D.) from their archaic to their mediaeval patterns

(i.e. from a merely political and administrative phase into a politico-economic phase) was paralleled with some other elements. First, the disintegration of centralized states of Sassamids and, later, of the Eastern Caliphate. Second, the intensification of the East-West trade due to the prosperity of the Byzantine Empire and the development of the Islamic Empire on the west and the establishment of the T'ang dynasty (618 - 906 A.D.) in China after a period of social unrest which was due to peasant rebellions and chronic wars among independent kingdoms.<sup>4</sup> Third, the beginning of the penetration by Turks<sup>5</sup> into the south-west from their hinterland central Asia.

When the north-east of Iran was suffering from local battles and banditry (the period between the withdrawal of the Caliphs' absolute authority - eighth century - and the establishment of small kingdoms - 10th century), commercial routes were diverted, once again, to the south. Maritime routes were more frequently used between the Persian Gulf, Western India, Ceylon and Indonesia. The direct trade with China and India produced the fortunes of Siraf and Basra.<sup>6</sup>

Among the accounts and written information left from mediaeval times, Ibn-Balkhi's financial report about the amount of tribute collected from southern provinces of Iran is of great importance. What is significant is the

share of Siraf as a financial source.

From the table 'I' produced after Ibn-el-Balkhi, Fars made the largest contribution. This was mainly due to the agricultural prosperity and also to the abundance of grazing lands in the Zagros highlands. It should, however, be noticed that the significant difference between tributes collected from Fars on the one hand and Kerman plus Oman on the other was also due to the geographical boundaries of provinces at the time of the report.

TABLE II

c. 200 A.H. )  
c. 815 A.D. ) **TRIBUTES COLLECTED AT THE TIME OF THE CALIPH AL-MOGHTADER**

	<u>Tributer</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Fars + Siraf + 1/10 of Maritime Trade	Siraf + 1/10 of Maritime (i.e. all the ships Trade of the Persian sea)	253,00 gold dinars
	Fars Province	1,381,500 gold dinars
	Kirman + Oman (all together)	444,380 gold dinars
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,331,800 gold dinars</b>

Source: Ibn-el-Balkhi "Fars Name", Ed. by G. LeStrange and R.A. Nicholson, London, 1968, 3rd ed. pp.170 - 173.



The presence of a large population of nomads (Kurds)<sup>7</sup> in Fars was another source of tribute. Kurd tribes, as reported by Ibn-Hugal,<sup>8</sup> consisted of about 500,000 households (980 A.D.). He has named 33 of their well known clans. He also noted that each clan had about 1000 riders. However, according to their partial political and economic autonomy, Kurds could not have been a big contributor of tributes. According to Table II, c. 15.5% of the total tribute collected in Fars came from Siraf and the maritime trade. This amount, according to Islamic fiscal acts, was 1/10 of the total<sup>9</sup> transactions of the Siraf market and the ships of the Fars sea.<sup>10</sup> Considering the amount of 253,000<sup>D</sup> being 1/10 of the total transactions of maritime trade, the value of the annual trade must have been at least 2.5 million dinars. This amount, however, was well over the total revenue of Fars, Kerman and Oman, i.e. an essential part of the country.

The concentration of such large commercial activity in one or two ports of the Persian Gulf had an enormous effect on the urban life of the area. The port cities of Hormoz and Siraf were the main gates of maritime trade well before Islam.<sup>11</sup> Mehroban and Basra developed later. The economic and political superiority of each of these places was changed due to historical conditions in each period.

It is reported that before Islam "tribute collected

from Pars (Fars) used to be 40,000,000 dirham (1 gold dinar = 12 silver Dirham - thus, 3,330,000 dinar). The tribute collected from Kirman totalled a sum of 60,000,000 Dirham (5,000,000 dinar). This was because Kirman used to be a large area of 180 x 180 Farsakh (roughly 1000 x 1000 Km).<sup>12</sup> It is not clear what is the area to which Ibn-Faqih refers as Kirman. However, one fact is noticeable. Geographical boundaries of provinces and districts or, in other words, political divisions of mediaeval Iran were somehow loose and unsettled. This was due to the abundance of useless, semi-desert lands, especially in central parts of the Iranian plateau.

In 820 A.D. to which Ibn-Balkhi's financial report belongs (Table II) Siraf was the only well developed and well controlled sea port (under Bagdad's rule) from which the so-called Muslim traders could handle their merchandise. Such a situation could undoubtedly affect other towns and cities located on the land trade routes from Siraf to Bagdad or Siraf to Asia Minor via the west and north-west of the Iranian plateau. It is in this connection that the geographers of the 10th and 11th centuries (Ibn-Hugal, Istakhri, Ibn-el-Balkhi, Ibn-Faqih etc.) in their accounts refer to the cities of Kazerun, Shushtar, Siniz, Gondishapur etc., producing all sorts of fabrics and clothes, golden dresses, silken veils and the like, sent to kings and amirs. Siraf itself is known to have been prosperous and its residents affluent; but there is no reference to any type of product

from Siraf itself. Although Siraf has been very important for the economy of its regions, the lack of ability of self-reproduction due to its dependence on trade alone leaves us no choice but to classify Siraf as an unstable city; which means that the dynamics and material forces for its reproduction are external to the city itself or to its region. This type of classification is important in that it helps to clarify the nature of the society and the types of activities in the city. In the case of Siraf the presence of wealthy merchants is well documented. Siraf is reported as a crowded city with wealthy inhabitants, mostly merchants. Its multi-storey houses were built of teak or so-called Zanzibar wood and were compared with those of Egypt. A merchant was, surprisingly, reported to have paid 30,000 dinars for his house.

This account uncovers the economic significance of Siraf. Comparing the price paid for the construction of a house with the annual tribute paid by the city, it is not difficult to realize that there was a considerable accumulation of merchant capital in Siraf and that only an insignificant part of it was appropriated by the state.

#### TYOLOGY OF MEDIAEVAL IRANIAN CITIES

It is important to notice that Arab and Persian mediaeval historians and geographers hardly separated a city from the region or district in which the city was

located.<sup>13.</sup> This fact is well elaborated by scholars of Persian Studies.<sup>14.</sup> This was mostly the case with towns and cities, the *raison d'etre* of which was regional.<sup>15.</sup> This means that those cities were the outcome of an organic development of their own regions. External factors, such as political changes, military interventions and other depressing or stimulating factors for the life of a city could only produce alterations in the process of development of such cities. Thanks to an old footnote to a manuscript of Surat-al-Ard, Neishabur was reported to be completely devastated by Turk invaders and rebuilt even larger than the old town in less than 50 years.

Before examining the relationships between town and country, a classification of settlements according to the long distance trade would be helpful.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF TOWNSHIPS IN RELATION TO THE LONG DISTANCE TRADE

According to their relationships with long distance trade, Iranian urban conglomerations can be divided into two broad categories. First, those settlements which only served caravans by providing them with provisions, horses, camels, caravanserais, bath, etc. Second, towns or cities which were engaged in transactions with the transit mercantile flow passing their territory. Natural conditions of the region in which the town was located was

undoubtedly a decisive factor for the kind of town which developed. The route, however, could become an encouraging factor for the potential abilities of a region and the town to flourish.

In the first category one can name numerous towns, especially in the province of Kirman, where the natural environment did not permit settlements to grow larger than a big village (either qualitatively or quantitatively). There were cases in which a town developed because of the trade route, but it also established a mutual relationship with the region and became a regional centre. Yazd is the best example of such cities. This city, once created in relation to Kirman-Isfahan and Kirman-Tabriz communications, developed as the centre of the region. In C. 1300 A.D. Yazd received its own separate governor for the first time, although it was still considered as a part of Fars.

The classification of urban agglomerations according to their relationship with the region to which they belong is valid when studying a city in a historical perspective. However, once established it is difficult to draw a clear line between the two types of settlements. Considering general characteristics of each of these types, one might be able to classify their specific/common features as follows:

POSITION OF URBAN CENTRES IN RELATION TO  
MAJOR TRADE ROUTES

<u>Dependent</u>	<u>Independent</u>
Service centre	Regional centre
Catering for the caravan	Exchange with the caravan
Economic life depends on the long distance trade	Economic life depends on the productive activities of the city and its region.

Thus the difference in the pattern of development of the two types becomes clear. Hence it can be suggested that those patterns have to be studied in a regional context.

This means that the study of the development of those towns and cities can only be comprehensive if it is done together with their regions. Regions, on the other hand, are significant here only in relation to their peculiarities influencing the urban life: in other words, regions considered as a basis on which the economic structure of a specified society is constructed.

REGIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE IRANIAN PLATEAU  
IN RELATION TO THE MEDIAEVAL URBAN PATTERNS

So far as the economic life of Mediaeval Iran is concerned, regions of the Iranian plateau can be divided geographically into three broad groups.

1. Regions where dry farming constituted the major type of production.
2. Regions in which, due to the geographical obstacles, dry farming was not practised and cultivation consisted of irrigated farming.

3. Regions where livestock raising was the dominant type of production.

The basis for such a division can be better understood in relation to the specificities of the geographical character of agrarian production in Iran.

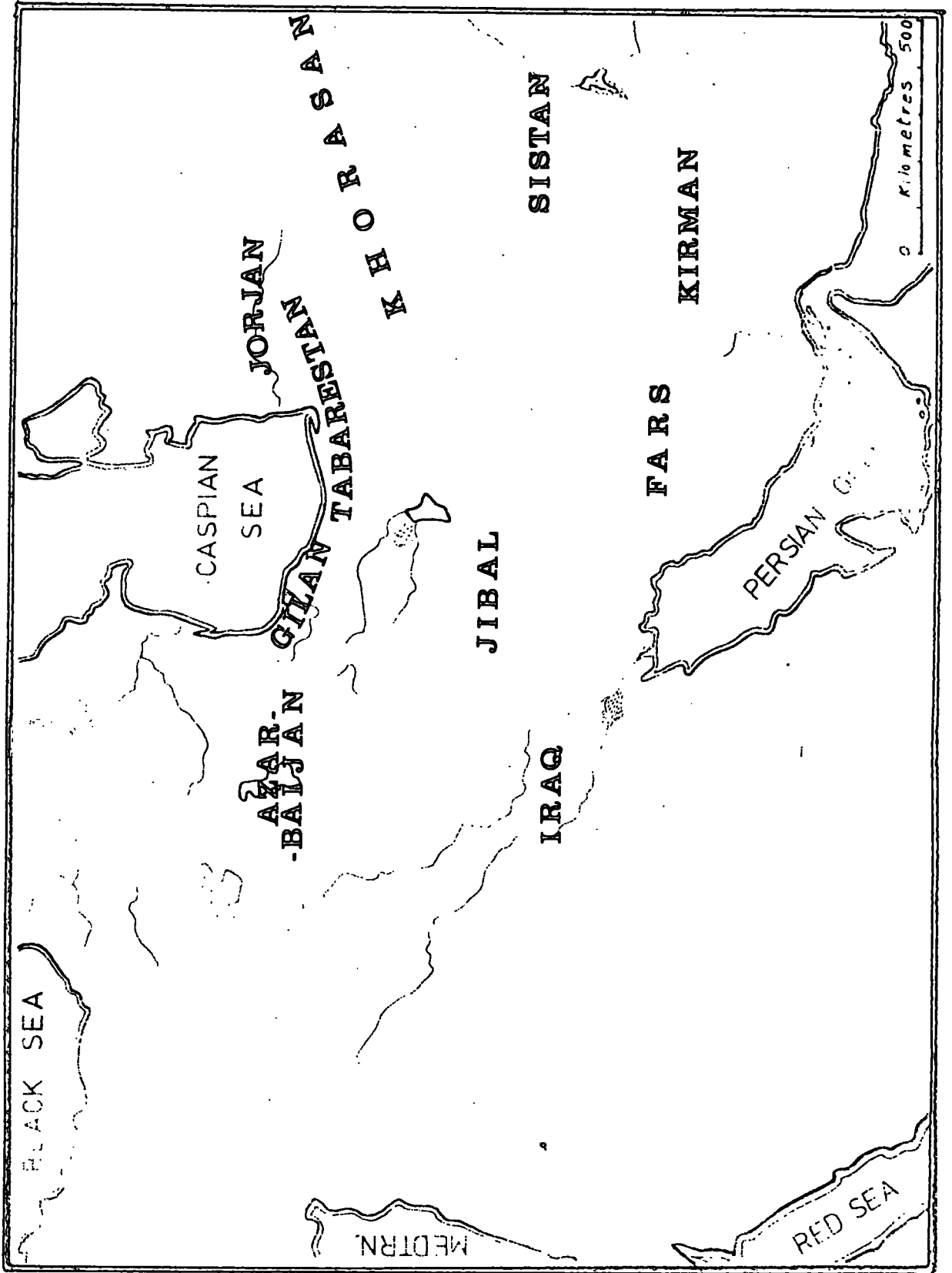
As was said before, in those regions in which cultivated land received only the natural rainfall (dry farming) productivity has always been low. Thus the surplus produced, (i.e. excess to the necessary per capita consumption of the peasant family at the subsistence level) was insignificant. While in areas where shortage of rainfall did not permit any dry farming (second type), irrigated farming was practised. This was done either by water provided by the rivers or brought to the surface by the Qanat system. This type of cultivation has had a relatively high amount of crop production and has always been the major source of food and wealth production for agriculturally non-productive classes. These two types of farming regions produced completely different conditions for their urban centres.

In those regions where dry farming was practised (like parts of Azarba i j an, Khorassan, Fars and Jebal) low productivity of land limited the growth of settlements (except for a few major cities which were at the fringe of such regions, like Tabriz and Hamadan). Although the population of these regions was not insignificant, communities were scattered in small villages but not very

far from each other. The pattern of distribution of the population in the second type of region (i.e. irrigated farming) was different. This difference was for the very reason that water was the dominant factor dictating the location and the size of the farm as well as the population. However, the presence of surplus production in this type of cultivation was the major basis for the establishment of human agglomerations, either in the form of large villages or towns. The presence of surplus enabled the regions to establish an exchange relationship with other regions and also to stimulate the development of crafts and manufacturing in the region. Such a condition was the most favourable circumstance for the state (local or central), seeking the economic surplus, to be present and to control the production and circulation. Hence cities were centres of regions to which surplus was channelled and also where the presence of a city was necessary to handle this regional exchange. One can conclude that the presence of the city and the economic significance of the region were interconnected.

The third type of region, in which livestock raising was the dominant form of production, was also producing a surplus product. These regions, according to their characteristics, produced different types of livestock. Sheep and goats in Zagros and Azarbaijan; horses and cattle in Moghan and Jorjan; camels and goats in Sistan and other semi-arid regions. Cities next to this





Map No. 9

MAJOR PROVINCES  
(REGIONS) OF MEDIAEVAL  
IRAN

type of region (like Ardabil, Sultaniyae, Kazerun and Jorjan) can be seen as centres established in relation to a specific type of regional surplus production. Products of those regions were mainly used as raw material by the manufacturing sector of cities (in the form of wool, leather, etc.).

Bearing in mind the dominant type of state in mediaeval Iran (centralized, with a large bureaucracy) the control of and dominance over the collection of the surplus was an essential task of the state. In this connection, collected surplus was not only in the form of corn and animals, but also in cash. Money, in the form of gold and silver coins, developed partly as the result of the acceleration of the speed and the enlargement of the volume of exchange in the society. At the time of strong, centralized states, the bazaar was the centre of urban affairs. There are three distinctive periods of urban prosperity in mediaeval Iran under more or less similar political conditions. These are when the country was united under a central state which had full authority over the surplus produced in the country; in 12th, 15th and 17th centuries A.D.

Before discussing periods of urban prosperity, another historical event should be stressed, namely the impact of Turkomans and Mongols on the Iranian social life. After the Turkoman invasion by the end of the 11th century (Ghuz tribes), a nomadic way of life was established in parts of Iran. This was mainly in regions where the geographical

conditions were suitable for pastoral life.

Because of the geographical conditions of the Iranian plateau, livestock breeding required seasonal wandering. This physical movement has always been pursued to transfer animals from the summer quarters to the winter quarters and vice versa.

In the 15 year period of occasional Mongol invasions, most of the Iranian cities (especially north-eastern and northern) were destroyed. More importantly, the agricultural infrastructure was destroyed (i.e. water distribution systems, canals, Qanats etc) In the first half of the 13th century Iran experienced Mongol invasion. This attack was not conducted in a single expedition. Due to their way of life, Mongols did not respect agricultural resources and urban centres. Their life was, to a large extent, based on a nomadic economy, for which grazing land was the most suitable environment. Large settlements were considered as a potential military threat to Mongols rather than economic centres, and cultivation meant destruction of grazing land. The period during which Mongols repeatedly attacked the Iranian plateau but did not settle in it, was the period of total destruction. One of the interesting points, showing the level of dependence of the Mongolian economy on pastoral life and the absence of an agricultural tradition among them before their settlement, is that they learned to make the bread

and use the corn in the form of flour in the conquered land.<sup>16.</sup> Again, the reliance of Mongols on dairy products and meat is well documented by contemporary travellers.<sup>17.</sup> Unlike agricultural activities, trade and barter was quite developed between Mongol tribes and neighbouring countries. Tchangiz Khan's reforms, which largely benefited merchants' activities in central Asia,<sup>18.</sup> or Mangu's order to produce legal identification for traders<sup>19.</sup> are good evidence of this point. Mirkhand reported a volume of 500 karts (monthly ) of goods and drinks being imported by Mongols under Ugtay's rule.<sup>20.</sup> More importantly is Juveini's report confirming that merchants and traders took part in the Mongol 'Quriltai'<sup>21.</sup> (i.e. their political tribal reunion to decide future policies). All these reports and accounts belong to the times prior to the Mongol invasion or to the period when they had not yet established a kingdom in Iran. After the establishment of the Ilkhan's dynasty in Iran, the necessity of control over the conquered land as regards the collection of tributes and tax led to the reintroduction of the previous practices in the form of Divan.<sup>22.</sup> Many State affairs which were practiced by Mongols were taken from the Saljuq institutions.<sup>23.</sup> One of the most important points was the recognition of the private ownership of the land at the time of Ghazan, the Ilkhan Emperor. This institution had been well developed once before during

the Saljuq. <sup>24.</sup>

Parallel to the development of the Mongol Empire, pastoral life and its corresponding social and political structures were widespread in suitable regions of Iran and some settlements were established according to this type of economy. The best classical example of them is the city of Sultanyae, which will be discussed later.

#### SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PRECONDITIONS OF URBAN PROSPERITY IN MEDIAEVAL IRAN

According to the mediaeval historians and geographers of Iran there is a direct relationship between the development and prosperity of cities and strong, centralized states. This fact can be observed historically in parts of the Iranian plateau, such as in Fars, Khuzistan, Jorjan and Kirman during Buyyids (11th century), <sup>25.</sup> in Khorassan, Ray and Sistan under Ghaznavids (12th century) <sup>26.</sup> and Samanids (11th century). <sup>27.</sup> In the late 12th and early 13th centuries, after a period of disintegration, urban life once again flourished. This was after the recovery from the consequences of the Mongol invasion. The nature of the urban life in each of those periods was not exactly the same. Each period developed its corresponding urban culture. One element which has been respected and has survived as the core of the city is the bazaar.

The crucial element for centralized systems to have

an efficient control over their territory was an adequate bureaucratic machinery to run the system. Since the establishment of the Islamic Empire, Turk servants (sometimes known as slaves) formed the main source of the military strata. While the need for literate and cultured Divani (bureaucrats) class could only be satisfied by recruiting from the local (i.e. Persian) urban families. This fact gave rise to an urban elite which was politically powerful. Access to literacy and other relevant knowledge required by a Divani, such as mathematics, bookkeeping, geometry etc. were not available to ordinary people. Those sciences were only available to the urban notables. The genealogical network of the 'patricians' of Neishabur, produced by Bulliet, illustrates the family relationships of the urban notables and state officials<sup>28</sup>. between the 11th to the 13th centuries. During this period noble families were developing in cities as a social class and, according to their social and political position, they were able to secure an economic basis for themselves. This was either by the ownership of agricultural land or by controlling (appropriating) the revenues of land and trade. The ideological element for the identification and unification of these urban nobles was naturally within the context of Islam. Ghaznavid rulers supported the Hanafis (a sect of Sunni Islam), while Saljuq were in favour of Shafeis (another Muslim sect).<sup>29</sup> Each sect was developed or supported by (in other

words it belonged to) a specific city or region. Urban segregation in the context of religious sectarianism is quite well known in mediaeval Iran.<sup>30.</sup>

Unification of most parts of the Iranian plateau under the Saljuq dynasty enabled (and also forced) the central state to produce a certain bureaucratic class independent of the 'patricians'.<sup>31.</sup> The institutionalization of Madrasa (school) and its retention in the hands of the state was the logical answer to this need. This was the first time that a series of schools were built in Iran by the state, from Neishabur to Bagdad. They were known as Neza<sup>m</sup>īye, after the name of the Saljuq vizier, Nizam-al-Mulk.<sup>32.</sup> The location of Madrasa in the city - in the bazaar next to the mosque - once again strengthened the centrality of the bazaar as a social and political centre.

State control over the ideological and political institutions was an effective way of having control over the economy of the country. In this connection, cities were crucial centres for the centralized state.

The discontinuity of the urban development between the Mongol invasion and the establishment of the Moghol (Ilkhans) kingdom did not affect the essence of urban life because the Moghol social structure was, basically, not much different from that of the Saljuq.<sup>33.</sup> This was mainly

because of the continuity of the Iranian social formation and because the social relations remained almost unchanged.

There was a new type of city with a significant scale introduced during the Moghol period, namely 'pastoral city'. Commerce was well known to the Mongols and, in fact, it formed an essential part of their economic system. Export of animal products, i.e. fur, skin, horses, etc. was followed by the import of food (corn, raisins, wine, etc.) fabrics and luxury goods.<sup>34.</sup> Parallel to the development and unification of Mongol tribes, Tchangiz Khan (Timutchin) set up a mercantile credit company with the participation of the Mongol princes, through which money was lent to merchants in return for profit.<sup>35.</sup> There were also policies for persuading Mongols to get involved in trade. Mongol kings are said to have offered the initial capital to their people for trade.<sup>36.</sup> Rashid-el-Din reported special workshops in Bukhara which produced special fabrics and carpets for Mongols before the city was conquered.<sup>37.</sup>

It seems that exchange of goods is an essential component of the nomadic economy, which played an important role at a certain stage of its development.

After the establishment of the Moghol kingdom in Iran, some aspects of the Mongol economic structure were continued. The pastoral economy survived until the



expansion of the administrative organizations forced the state to the systematic collection of land tributes.

Decentralization of tribute collection and its collecting centres enabled the central Divan, based in Tabriz, to operate more efficiently. Unification of currency, in weight and value,<sup>38.</sup> introduction of cash payment by the government<sup>39.</sup> and strict control over the tax collected from agricultural land, as well as from cities,<sup>40.</sup> stimulated the urban economy. According to Rashid-el-Din, the army was paid in cash to purchase armaments and other necessities in the market.<sup>41.</sup> The result of the reform was an enormous improvement in urban life.<sup>42.</sup>

### MORPHOLOGY OF CITIES

There are three distinct sections in a mediaeval Iranian city; the Bazaar, the Qal'a and the Mahalle. The Bazaar, as the economic as well as the social centre, was becoming more and more the physical centre of the city. The constituent elements of the bazaar could be divided into three groups. First, the economic elements consisted of shops, workshops, caravanserais, warehouses and trade offices. The second group comprised public amenities either built by the state or as private endowments. These were baths, rest houses, water reservoirs and public washing facilities. Official representatives of the state

were also present in the bazaar to control the import and export and transit of merchandise. As all the outflow and inflow of goods from and to the city was subject to tax, any caravan carrying goods had to be inspected by 'Tamgha'<sup>43</sup> collectors. For this purpose there were special caravanserais built by the state, usually at the gate of the city.<sup>44</sup> These were often somewhere along the bazaar. Public facilities were also provided as parts of the caravanserai complex by the state.<sup>45</sup> It might have been in this connection that kings and governors used to build bazaars with all their elements to attract more artisans and merchants.<sup>46</sup> The third group was formed by places in which the political and ideological life of society was carried out, i.e. mosques and madrasas. The mosque has always been a political centre in which local matters of citizens were discussed. The madrasa was an educational institution in which religious leaders and state functionaries were trained. The combination of these three places formed the bazaar. Hence it is not far from the reality to consider the bazaar as the centre of a mediaeval city in Iran and neighbouring regions.

The Qal'a, or the fortress, consisted of a fort which held armaments, the treasury, governors' quarters and the military forces. The Qal'a was usually attached to the city and sometimes it was a part of the city.<sup>47</sup>

There are also reports of the Qal'a being separately located near the city.<sup>48</sup> (The best example is the Qal'a' of Shadiakh, near Neishabur).

The Mahalle, meaning quarter, was a unit of the residential area based on either ethnic or religious (sometimes occupational) groups. These divisions were peculiar to each city according to its own social and political conditions. Shiraz is reported to have had seventeen mahalles.<sup>49</sup> The length of its surrounding wall was about 12,500 paces.<sup>50</sup> As evidence of the moderate weather of Shiraz, Mustowfi refers to the vegetation grown on the roofs of the bazaar.<sup>51</sup> This account, however, reveals the fact that the bazaar of Shiraz was covered (in 1340 A.D.)

The city of Tabriz used to be enclosed within a wall with a length of 6,000 paces. That was before becoming the Moghol's capital,<sup>52</sup> Of the old city, Mustowfi named ten gates and, at the end of his sentence, called them mahalle. It is not clear whether each mahalle was related to one of the city's gates. Tabriz grew rapidly during the Moghols. Nuzhat-al-Qulub reports that the number of houses built outside the city walls was larger than those inside.<sup>53</sup> The new wall, built by Ghazan Khan, took in not only houses, but gardens and villas and measured 25,000 paces.<sup>54</sup>

The distinguished mahalle of Tabriz built by the

Moghols' powerful vizier, Rashid-el-Din, called Rob'-e-Rashidi, is the best known among the extensions of Tabriz built in the 14th century.<sup>55</sup> Mustowfi refers to a mosque built by a certain vizier called Ali-Shah outside a mahalle known as Narmian.<sup>56</sup> There must also have been residential quarters for religious minorities in Tabriz, especially Jews and Christians. We know that the north-western provinces of Iran were the most important mission fields of the Dominican order.<sup>57</sup> There exists a Papal bull issued to create a new Archdiocese of Sultaniya.<sup>58</sup> This leaves no doubt about the presence of Christian quarters in those cities.

Sultaniya was built by the Moghols as a new capital. This city was erected on a site where no urban centre of settlement existed. Mustowfi, describing Sultaniya, stressed that wintering and summering places were within a one-day journey from the place and there was everything people might need in Sultaniya like vast meadows and fantastic game fields.<sup>59</sup> After all those comments one can see the influence of nomadic life and of a nomadic region influencing the creation of a city. After it was built, Sultaniya was used as the political capital of the Moghol Empire in Iran. By the end of the 1340s and the death of the last Ilkhan, Sultaniya started to deteriorate, together with the nomadic life in that part of Iran. Although the reports do not refer to any specific spatial division in

Sultaniya, the presence of different ethnic and religious groups is well documented (Mongols, Turks, Persians, Muslim sects, Christians and Jews). Mustowfi wrote "People have come from all over to this city with different religions and different languages".<sup>60</sup> He also reported the presence of a Qal'a in Sultaniya while measuring the periphery of the city - 30,000 paces.<sup>61</sup>

Qazvin is another city on the east-west route which developed in the 13th century. The periphery of the old city, built in the 11th century, is reported as 10,300 paces.<sup>62</sup> The old city of Qazvin is known as one mahalle of 14th century Qazvin by Mustowfi.<sup>63</sup> After what has been said one can see that it is not easy to find a single definition to explain the concept of mahalle. Although mahalle represents a physical section of a town, the basis of this division varies considerably. Economic, political, ideological and ethnic differentiations have been typical bases for the division of a city into mahalles. Yet in the case of 14th century Qazvin one finds that the old city becomes one single mahalle with, presumably, all those social divisions. Material left from later periods, however, throw some light on this question which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The composition of Bazaar, Qal'a and Mahalle seems to be the most typical morphology of the mediaeval city in Iran. This composition remained almost the same until the late 18th century and the beginning of the 19th.

Then, gradually, the Qal'a lost its importance while the bazaar attracted other elements such as the state offices. The mahalle, however, by changing its characteristics according to the time and place, still remains an essential cultural and social unit in traditional cities of Iran.

CHAPTER V

TOWNS AND CITIES IN IRAN IN THE PERIOD  
16th TO 19th CENTURIES A.D.

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Iranian society has experienced a different process of development as compared with other Islamic societies of Asia and north Africa since the hegemony of the Turks (11th century A.D.) The period 11th to 16th centuries in Iran is characterized by a tribal social formation. Physical movement due to animal breeding, unattachment to the land, long distance communication, hierarchical and patrimonial social and political structures and active urban life as a necessity of the system regarding exchange and administration are some features of this social formation. The appearance of autocratic kings in such a system is, in fact, the logical outcome of its development.

The political economy of tribal social formation is a vast topic and is outside the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it is necessary to stress that this should be considered as the essential socio-economic basis on which mediaeval Iranian cities stood.

The domination of the Moghols (13th and 14th centuries) can be regarded as yet another step away from the 'Islamic tradition'. The relationships established between crusaders and Ilkhan Moghols of Iran<sup>1.</sup> as well as

the presence of non-Muslim officials and viziers are good indicators of such separations.<sup>2</sup> In the words of Minorsky :

"... during three quarters of a century (1221 - 1295) or three generations Persia lived under the rule of infidel governors and princes, who made no distinction among the creeds of their new subjects, who used Christian auxiliary troops and who employed Jewish viziers alongside administrators...

It was the greatest indignity the Muslims of the Middle East had ever experienced and it culminated in the sack of Bagdad (1258). " 3.

When autocracy confronted the tribal aristocracy the nature of the ideological system to which it resorted<sup>4</sup> was vitally important. At that time Islam in general was the dominant ideology of the country. To secure their position in the society and to back their new economic ties with the productive part of the society (i.e. small proprietors, peasants and craftsmen), Moghol kings became Muslims. The opposition of the old tribal aristocracy to the new system together with the over-exploitation of the resources resulted in the deterioration of the Empire.

The conquest of Timur swept away the principalities formed here and there on the debris of the Moghol Empire. The period between the end of the Moghols and the establishment of the Safavid dynasty (end of the 14th till the beginning of the 16th century) did not witness any particular urban activity inside the plateau.<sup>5</sup>



## THE NEW HISTORICAL PHASE OF URBAN LIFE

The period 1500 - 1722 A.D. (Safavid rule) can be regarded as a new phase of urban development in Iran. This period, having its roots in the traditional background of Iranian society, has two outstanding features affecting urban life. First the establishment of Shi'ism (a Muslim sect known as the ideology of the opposition since the early Islamic period) as the official religion and, second, the appearance of European merchants in the economic life of Iran.

The new religious sect was by then (1500) well established in parts of Iran and it gave great strength to the new dynasty to unite some tribes and regions. Parallel to this movement was the formation of the Ottoman Empire. Shi'ism, and its great appeal among the people, should be considered "along with the popular heterodox movements which, in the fifteenth century, shook Asia Minor in opposition to Ottoman centralism".<sup>6</sup> The result of this, however, was a political success for the Safavids. The domination of the new belief had some effect on urban classes and those who were in office; most of them Sunnis.

The discovery of the new maritime route round Africa resulted in a new type of commercial relationship with the West. The presence of European merchants and their vessels in the Persian Gulf and the establishment of their trading agencies in the area resulted in a competitive

relationship among them to obtain better positions in terms of their trade with Iran.<sup>7.</sup>

### URBAN SOCIAL CLASSES

By the establishment of the Safavid dynasty in Isfahan (their third capital, after Ardabil and Qazvin) a centralized autocratic kingship became superior to both religious and tribal leadership, on which this dynasty was based.<sup>8.</sup> As a consequence of such a change, the structure of the ruling classes was altered. Minorsky seems to be the first who has noticed this change and has compared the contemporary documents.<sup>9.</sup> Under the first king of this dynasty the Amirs (military commanders and dignitaries) were enumerated in their tribal rank.<sup>10.</sup> All together there were 114 Amirs registered in the books of the supreme Divan,<sup>11.</sup> ... and this was the tribal aristocracy from which commanders of troops, governors and high officials were recruited."<sup>12.</sup> On the other hand, historical accounts written at the time of the centralized state refer to Amirs in two categories. First, the members of a special royal tribe and its clans (Qizil-Bash tribe) and, second, the Amirs who were Ghulams (slaves) of the court.<sup>13.</sup> This change obviously had caused some conflict between the ruling classes.

The members of the ruling classes and those attached to them formed a fairly large community and could cover

an immense part of the urban population. According to Alam-Ara<sup>14</sup>. there were six thousand officers and intendants at the court (1600 A.D.) These are reported to have had 'efficient servants', from 5 to 50 in number.<sup>15</sup> This figure would give a rough idea of the size of attendants of the Royal Court and that of the Divan, most of whom were dwellers in the capital city, Isfahan. Minorsky reckons that "attendants and servants, who were not properly registered, were approximately 20,000 or more."<sup>16</sup> This type of lavish court was also repeated, although on a smaller scale, in provincial centres under the governor-generals.<sup>17</sup>

This change in the nature of the ruling classes had a direct effect on Iranian society. In association with the change in the nature of the ruling class components, a population movement from rural to urban areas took place. This was basically in relation to the change in the proportion of State lands to Royal lands in favour of the latter.<sup>18</sup> Revenues of the Royal lands were hardly spent on current expenditures of the country.<sup>19</sup> It was the general opinion that "the Khassa (Royal land) system impoverished the country by draining into the courts' coffers the money which ought to have circulated in the country".<sup>20</sup> The reduction of actual area of State lands could reduce the income of the State; in practice, however, the rate of exploitation of peasant and nomad communities increased to meet the expenditure of the country. Minorsky

quoted from contemporary sources that "here (in Fars) the change of the system had reduced the population by 80,000." <sup>21</sup>.

Very little is known about the population movement in the mediaeval history of Iran. The fact that peasants in Iran were less attached to the land as compared with feudal Europe <sup>22</sup>. made possible the migration of rural populations towards larger settlements in hard times. In the case of 17th century Fars there are no reports of a great death toll in the area. Therefore the possibility that migration took place becomes greater. We also know, for example, that the basin of Isfahan was highly populated <sup>23</sup>. and the city of Isfahan had some 700,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants. <sup>24</sup>.

Returning to the question of urban classes, more than 40 professions are reported in the bazaar of Isfahan by a certain contemporary Capusin priest. <sup>25</sup>. Most of them were petty traders and artisans preparing and producing goods for the needs of the everyday urban life. Here again the court played an active role in the economic life of cities. "The privileged class of artisans were those belonging to the Royal Workshops." <sup>26</sup>. Craftsmen were organized in professional groups called Sinf which, except for the absence of any political significance, had similar features to the western guild. <sup>27</sup>. Sinf was a kind of urban professional corporation which was not organized to protect the profession and common interests of its

members. Although the representative of the Sinf was elected by its members, his sphere of authority was quite restricted,<sup>28.</sup> "except in the cases wherethey had to call up their guildsmen for carrying out corvees for the king."<sup>29.</sup> In studying the system of tax collection and the levy paid by some Sinfs, it is clear that those organizations mostly served the state rather than their own members.<sup>30.</sup> Despite the studies and efforts to compare guild with Sinf, any such comparison seems to be out of context. The guild is only meaningful in the context of an urban constitution. Under the absolutist system of 16th and 17th centuries Iran, however, one can hardly think of any political organization independent of the Palace.<sup>31.</sup>

As far as the topography of cities of the period is concerned, the location of each profession in one part of the bazaar was reinforced by the Sinf. Professional separation did influence the residential pattern of urban groups. The close relationship between home and workshop had resulted in the allocation of residential quarters next to the bazaar for professionals, craftsmen, merchants and other relevant groups. Such a division can still be seen in old cities of Iran. In this respect the names of old quarters and streets are revealing.

#### URBAN MANUFACTURING AND TRADE

The introduction of the round Africa sea route as a result of the development of the bourgeoisie in Europe was

also the beginning of a new phase in the intercontinental trade between Iran and European countries, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Considering the economic significance of long distance trade, one can realize its influence on other aspects of urban life, such as manufacturing.

Silk was undoubtedly the most important trade article.<sup>32</sup> A yearly export of over 3000 tons of silk is the optimum amount recorded.<sup>33</sup> There were three routes under commercial operation; via Aleppo (supported by the English 'Levant Co. '), via the Persian Gulf and round Africa (supported by the East India Co.) and via Russia (supported by Muscovy Co.).<sup>34</sup> In the eyes of a Frenchman, However, Iran was but a caravanserai with two doors, having its entrance in Tabriz and the exit in Bandar-Abbas, on the Gulf.<sup>35</sup> It was in such a network that cities and towns were related to the trade. As far as the trade and urban crafts were concerned, the Royal Court (i.e. the Shah) was a separate institution having a separate financial establishment from that of the Divan.

The king was the biggest producer, consumer and merchant. A third of the total produce of silk was the king's levy.<sup>36</sup> On the manufacturing side, the annual expenditure of Royal workshops is estimated at about 350,000 Tumans.\*<sup>37</sup> Considering the total expenditure

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\* One Tuman = 10,000 dinars = £3. 6. 8d. ( gold sovereigns) for evaluation see Minorsky, V. 1943, p. 153. - in todays currency c. £90.

of the Divan given in Tadhkerat-al-Muluk, of c.625,275 Tumans, the previous estimate looks to be rather inflated. Nevertheless, the impact of Royal workshops on urban productive activities was quite significant.

Apart from enormous tailoring and weaving workshops, the Royal Mint, consisting of seven departments, and the Arsenal stood at the centre of the Royal workshops. On the commercial side the King's trade was handled by Armenians. Regarding the volume and the rate of profit of trade (an average of 80% to 100%)<sup>38</sup>. it is easy to assume the political intrigue behind the commerce,<sup>39</sup> the result of which, under the absolutist system, was a set of agreements between the King and foreign countries which were competing to get a better position.<sup>40</sup> This, however, had a negative impact on the development of the urban class of merchants.<sup>41</sup>

The outcome of this situation was a monopoly of trade granted either to foreigners or to the king's own agents.

### ETHNIC GROUPS

A feature of 16th and 17th century Iran was the introduction of new minorities into the central Iranian cities, e.g. Armenians and Georgians. Georgians were taken into the country as war captives and slaves. Later they were recruited to the Royal Praetorian Guard.<sup>42</sup> Some of the converted Muslim Georgians gained important

positions in the military and in the administration.<sup>43.</sup>

Armenians were mostly engaged in business. King's trade agents are reported to have been mostly Armenians. These two originally Christian communities settled basically in two parts of the country, Azarbaijan and Isfahan. Both these districts were politically and economically important. Azarbatjan, the gateway to Europe and second political centre of the country, accommodated a substantial number of Armenians. Armenian villages were established near Tabriz, Ardabil and Urmiya (now Rezaiya). New mahalles were also established for Armenians in major cities of Iran. In Tabriz the Armenian mahalle was built next to the city (this part still exists and forms the southern part of Tabriz). The Armenian quarter of Isfahan, on the southern bank of the Zayandeh Rud, was erected as an extension of Isfahan, but not attached to it. This area, which is still an Armenian settlement, is called New Julfa. There is no authentic source giving the size of these communities. However, Georgian cavalry is known to have numbered 30,000.<sup>44.</sup> Georgians were mostly converted to Islam and rapidly mixed with Iranians. On the other hand, Armenians were more successful in preserving their religion, language and ethnic identity. The initial population of New Julfa has been estimated at 15 - 20,000.<sup>45.</sup> The presence of these two ethnic communities inevitably produced another type of division within Iranian cities. In the case of Isfahan the river Zaydeh-Rud was the dividing



line. In the early years of their settlement in Iran many of these Christians were converted under pressure from both the government and ecclesiastic circles.<sup>46</sup> This mainly affected rural settlements.<sup>47</sup> In cities, however, Christianity continued and was practiced.

## URBAN STRUCTURE

### (1) Social elements

Consideration of the dominance of the Palace and related ruling classes over the urban economy illuminates the type of urban structure which developed. The tribal set up of 17th century Iranian society was formed as a pyramid, having the king at the top followed by a large number of viziers, governors, military commanders and heads of tribes and clans. In witness to the process of concentration of crafts and cottage industry in cities, Chardin wrote :

"Some workshops, such as the dye works and the silk factory, had been abolished and replaced by a system under which linen to be dyed was sent into the town.." 48.

Other crafts remained rural, such as carpets. These were produced by workmen "... to whom the king gave land and who paid their rent in the produce of their hands." 49.

The concentration of crafts in cities was partly due to the expansion of a systematic trade with Europe and partly because of the internal increase in demand for such products.

Specialization and division of labour alongside the growth of demand for goods, both internally and externally, affected regions and their towns. Gilan specialized in silk production, Kashan in spinning and weaving, Yazd developed cotton industries and Isfahan was the centre of trade and crafts exclusive to the King.

In cities where, traditionally, members of the ruling classes settled, a new type of division was taking place. These people, related to different tribes and clans, once reproduced this differentiated identity in the urban structure: but later, when the tribal basis of social identity lost its dominance in the city, urban quarters, as new bases of division, became institutions by which individuals identified themselves. In many old cities, even today, names of quarters reflect such divisions in the past. Examples of these are : Tougtchi, a famous mahalle in Isfahan (the name of an official post at court) and Tamghatchi, in Kashan (tax collectors).

The division of cities into mahalle is a pre-17th century social and physical phenomenon, but it was not until the 18th century that it became the most distinctive unit of the urban structure. The opposition of communities in cities resulted in strong physical segregation of mahalles and their enclosures within high walls and behind doors.<sup>50</sup> At times of social unrest (especially in the 18th century) these enclosures were reinforced in cities located on the

Central Plateau, such as Kashan, Yazd and Kerman.

The division of cities into mahalles or, more correctly, the formation and enlargement of cities out of several mahalles, was also reinforced by the practical advantages. The mahalle, being a social unit, was also an urban (i.e. physical) unit, which provided its inhabitants with the necessities of everyday life. Each mahalle consisted of at least one mosque, one water reservoir, one public bath and one open public space for religious gatherings. Occasionally these places, especially the mosque, were shared between two mahalles. Each mahalle had at least one main entrance connecting it to the main road. When two or three main roads crossed the intersection usually formed a small market, often covered with vaults and small domes. Main roads led to major streets of the city. These were vital arteries of the city connecting the gates to the centre and to each other. It was along these major roads that the bazaar developed.

Urban dwellers were often known by their mahalle. In 19th century Kashan even wealthy merchants and influential people were identified by their mahalle.<sup>51</sup> Considering all the possible connections, one would tend to assume that the mahalle has its social origins in the tribal structure of Iranian society. Institutional elements of mediaeval Iranian urban society are good indicators for such an assumption. The mahalle was treated very much

like a clan by the government. It was represented by one of its members who was the first link between the mahalle and the authorities.<sup>52</sup> This person was responsible to the government, from whom he received his salary.<sup>53</sup> The structure of the city, however, lay in its social organization. New classes of officials, merchants and ecclesiastics, with less tribal affinity when compared with their predecessors, were more inclined to organize themselves in the town in mahalles, - professional groups, religious groups etc. This was a typical urban social organisation in Iran from the late 16th to the beginning of the present century.

## (2) Geographical elements

Parallel to the social elements giving shape to the towns there were geographical elements sometimes having decisive effects on the town's physical pattern. The main natural obstacle, i.e. water, has always been the most important of them. Availability of water and techniques of distribution often dictated the orientation and limits of a town's growth. This was the case for most of the towns provided by Qanat water, like Kirman, Mashhad, Neishabur, Nain, Ardestan and Kashan.

Broadly speaking there were two types of water resources serving Iranian towns prior to the introduction of modern technology. These were rivers and qanats. Very few cities could enjoy river water. Isfahan is the only city on the central plateau located on a permanent river

(Zayandeh-Rud). Seasonal rivers were also of great importance, providing the central towns' water reservoirs with water. On some of these rivers dams were built to make their water available for agriculture.<sup>54</sup>

The second type of water resource, i.e. the qanat, was the most widely used all over the Iranian plateau. One of the elements defining the location of a town on the plateau is a mountain providing the town with water. Qanat brought the water to the town where it was distributed in a complex network of canals dug under the town. Hence, the direction of the water flow and capacity of each qanat were factors influencing a town's orientation and limiting its growth. When the social elements of a city were in favour of its growth, usually a new qanat was dug to supply the new additional mahalle. Individual wells were also used for the everyday supply of a household's water, when the level of underground water permitted. Yazd is the best example. There the water was attainable at a depth of 30 to 40 metres before the introduction of a deep well system some 20 years ago. In most cities a combination of these water resources were used. The qanat, however, was always the major source. Kashan's potable water came from seasonal rivers (Qamsar and Qohrud), while houses, workshops and public places like mosques and baths were provided by the qanat. The water reservoirs of Yazd were filled with qanat water for drinking purposes

while houses used the well. In the case of Isfahan a network of canals distributed the river into different sectors of the city. Apart from the economic, political and strategic location of Isfahan, the presence of Zayandeh-Rud (the river Zayandeh) was undoubtedly an essential factor for its re-election as the capital city in the 16th century.

A sharp reduction in the urban population in Iran is reported in the early 18th century. This fact was very much the result of political disintegration of the country and the deterioration of economic conditions, especially trade and urban manufacturing<sup>55</sup> and also over-exploitation of the agricultural sector due to high military expenditures.<sup>56</sup>

During the wars of the first half of the 18th century, Isfahan, Shiraz, Qazvin, Yazd and Tabriz are estimated to have lost two-thirds of their inhabitants.<sup>57</sup> The population of Isfahan was reduced to a few tens of thousands<sup>58</sup> (previously estimated at over 600,000). Tabriz, estimated by Chardin at a high figure of over 500,000 was reduced to some 30,000.<sup>59</sup> Qazvin, which inhabited twelve thousand houses a few decades before, had only eleven hundred.<sup>60</sup> The physical structure of cities, however, did not change substantially for there was no drastic change in the structure of the urban society, nor did technology and the system of urban production make any progress. The re-establishment of urban order in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was in fact the continuation of the pattern of urban development in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Natural events such as earthquakes and famines also did not change the 17th century urban pattern. After each disaster towns re-established themselves with very little change. The traditional location of historical buildings are the best signs of the continuation of the old order. Geographical analysis of some of the central Iranian cities, however, can better illustrate these points.

CHAPTER VI

OBSERVATION ON THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF  
SOME OF THE CENTRAL IRANIAN CITIES

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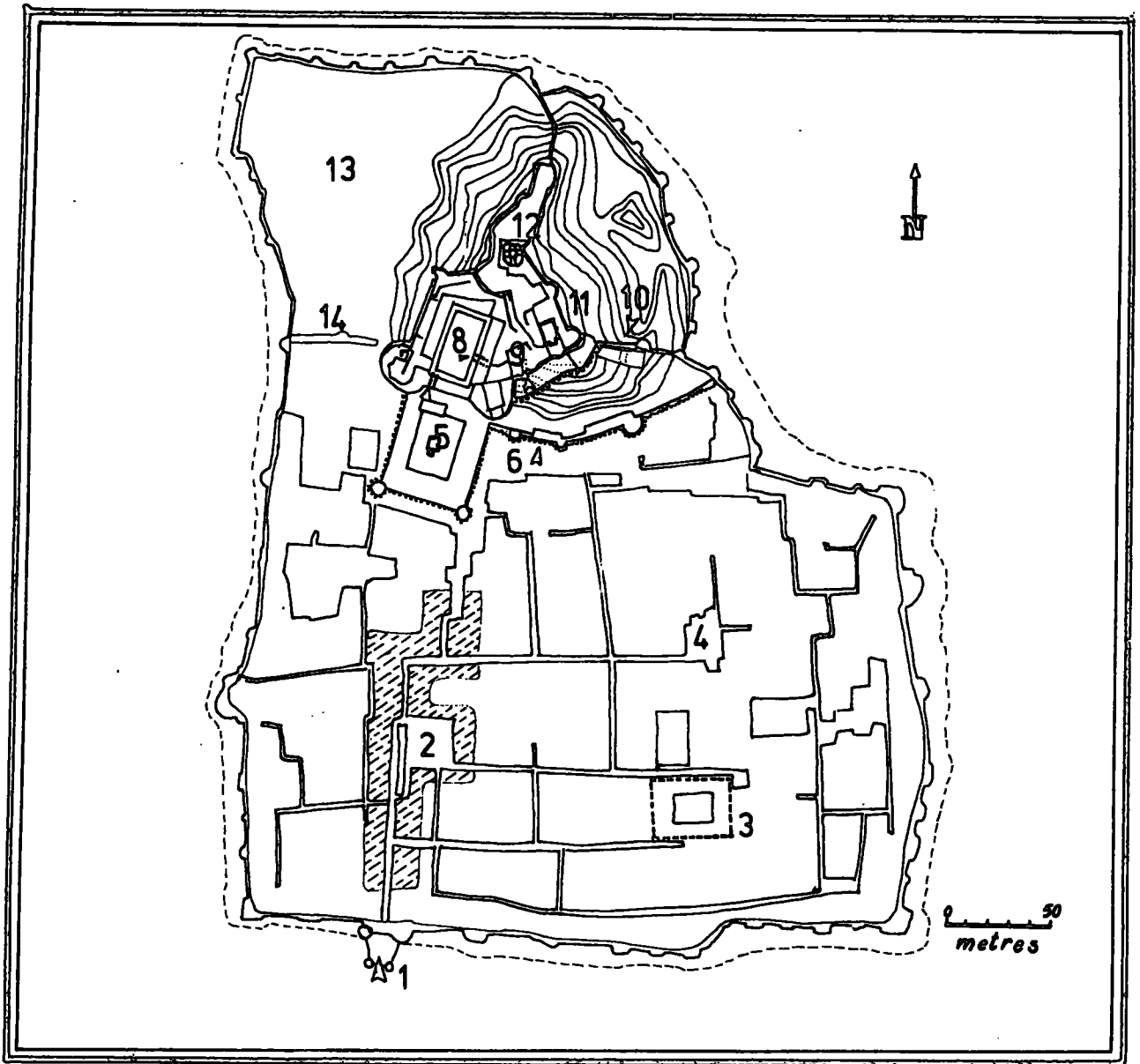
A brief investigation of the pattern of articulation of traditional urban spaces in some central Iranian cities will show the physical implications of the discussion forwarded in previous chapters.

BAM

Bam is one of the best examples for studying mediaeval Iranian cities. Historical stages of the city's growth, from the early mediaeval fortress to the 13th century citadel and town, and the 16th century city, are clearly distinguishable. The inner town (traditional Shahrestan) now called Arg (or Ark) (from the 18th century onwards) once represented the city of Bam. All the mediaeval urban elements, such as bazaar complex, mosque, public bath, caravanseral, takie (religious ceremonial space, also called Hosseiniye, sometimes covered under domes) can be seen inside the Arg (see map). The bazaar of the Arg, which stretched from the main gate to the maidan (square or place) is on the major road of the Arg. This road started from the southern gate towards the citadel and ended at the northern gate.

The maidan is probably the oldest type of commercial centre of Iranian towns. This was an open space in which weekly or other type of periodic markets





Map No. 10

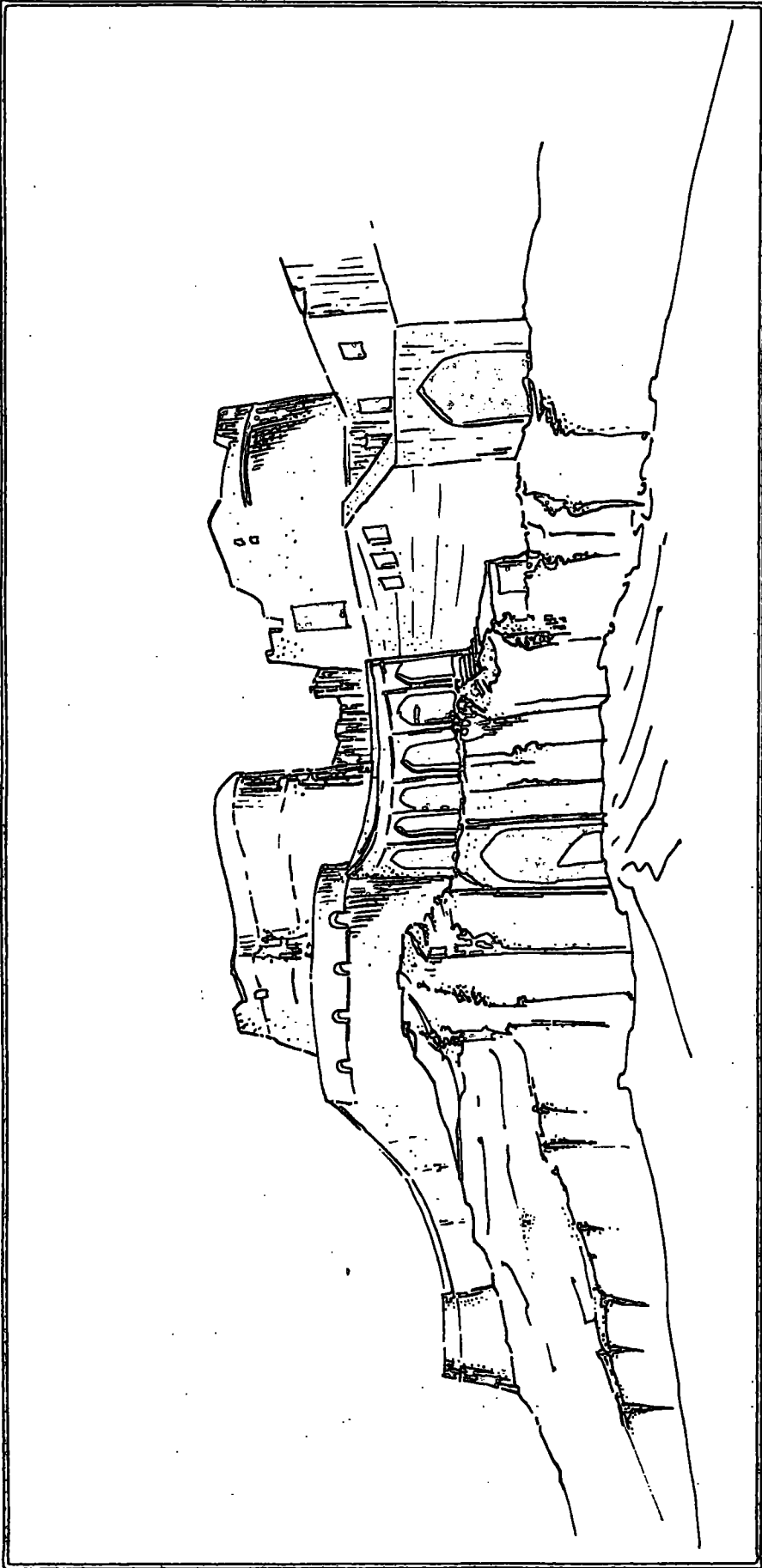
THE OLD TOWN & THE CITADEL OF BAM  
from: "THE ARK OF BAM" by:

H. Nourbakhsh et al.  
Tehran 1976

- 1\_ THE MAIN GATE
- 2\_ THE MAIDAN
- 3\_ THE MOSQUE
- 4\_ LOCAL MAIDAN AND TAKIE
- 5\_ THE STABLE
- 6\_ THE GATE OF THE QAL'
- 7\_ THE GATE OF THE ARSENAL
- 8\_ THE ARSENAL
- 9\_ THE OLD GATE OF THE QAL'A
- 10\_ THE NORTHERN GATE
- 11\_ THE CASTLE
- 12\_ THE PAVILION
- 13\_ KENARIAN (the marginals) SECTION
- 14\_ THE OLD FORTIFICATION

were held. The growth of mercantile activity and the necessity of providing adequate space to merchants, merchandise and their means of transport, together with climatic conditions and technological limitations, were most probably essential forces for the development of the bazaar.

The bazaar developed as a combination of market place (i.e. space for exchange of goods) and crafts centre (space for producing goods). However, it occupied permanently its traditional space after the introduction of an urban economy and massive commercial transit on the major thoroughfare of towns. The linear pattern of economic centres of Iranian towns was undoubtedly closely related with the characteristics of a permanently moving and travelling caravan carrying goods long distances, hence the need for rest houses, catering services and exchange. It was also influenced by the means of transportation, i.e. camels, mules, donkeys and horses. Animals have been the major means of transportation in Iran from the 6th century A.D. up to modern days. The wheeled carriage was well known and used in pre-Islamic Iran, but it disappeared and it was as late as the 19th century that it became once more the dominant form of transportation. This factor was quite important in giving shape to the bazaar. The type of arrangement of spaces in the bazaar, i.e. the network of relationships between caravanserai, shops and workshops, catering streets and shopping streets, public



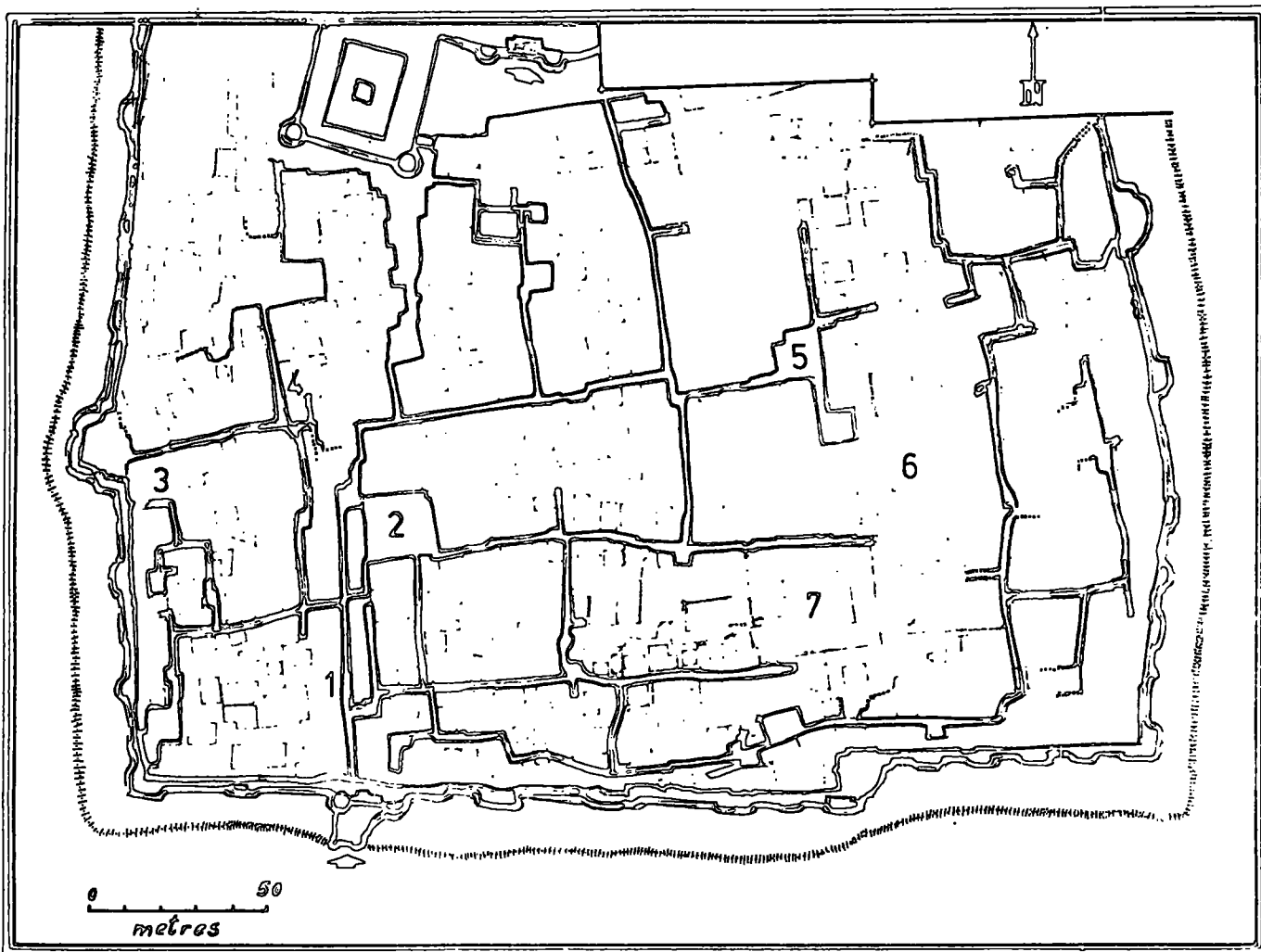
THE NORTHERN GATE The citadel of BAM

Drawing No. 1

services and caravanserai (see map) were, beyond any doubt, moulded under the influence of that type of transportation and its technical necessities.

Bam was on the major route from the Gulf to both Khorassan and Azarbaijan during the early mediaeval history of Iran. The position of Bam's citadel, on a mound, secured it from outside enemies, and its geographical location next to a temporary river not very far from the mountain range ensured its water resources. Agricultural land and orchards immediately outside the town (in the rabaz) were later secured by a surrounding wall. This, however, happened only when residential quarters were forming outside the citadel. This second wall around the larger area of Bam can be dated from the 16th century A.D. The map of Bam shows the town as it has stood for the last 50 years. The bazaar of Bam, in the traditional position, was formed on the major road. It starts from the city gate opening to the road coming from Kerman, Yazd and Isfahan.

The location of crafts in the bazaar was as follows : catering services to the caravans, like saddlemakers, rope makers, the hay market and alike, were located not far from the city gate and often next to the old maidan. The inner parts of the bazaar were used for more luxury goods - clothes, silk materials, jewellery, etc. By gaining its original position in mediaeval Iranian cities, the bazaar became a complex consisting of both economic and public



RECONSTRUCTED MAP OF THE CITADEL OF BAM

(The residential part: the Shahrestan)

source: "The Ark of BAM"  
Tehran 1976

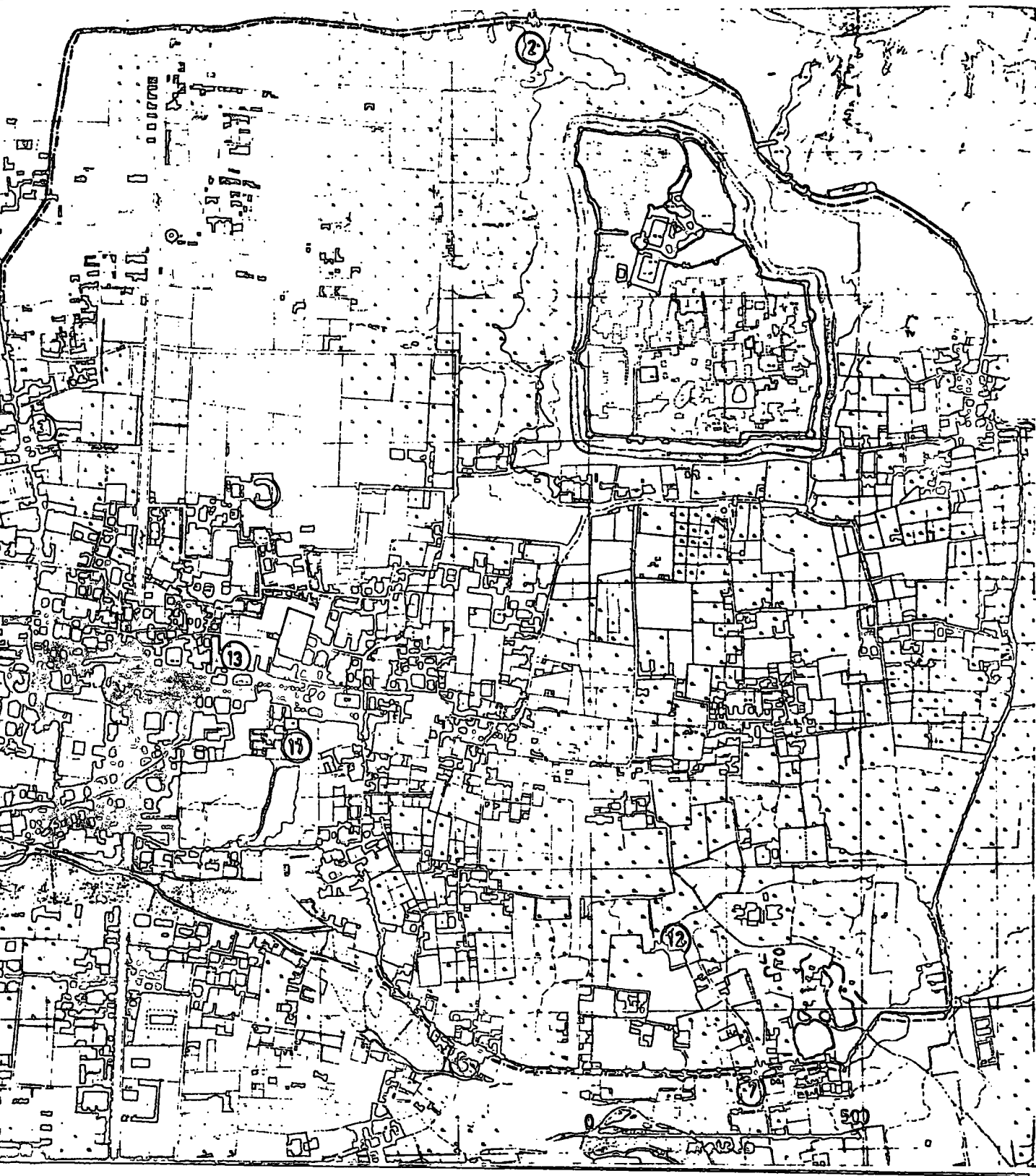
Map No. 11

- 1\_ The major thoroughfare
- 2\_ The Maidan
- 3\_ The public bath
- 4\_ The local mosque
- 5\_ Local maidan & takie
- 6\_ The Caravanserai
- 7\_ The Mosque

places. The public bath, the city's major mosque, water reservoirs and public washing basins were built as parts of this complex and were, all together, called the bazaar.

Another interesting feature of Bam is that some quarters can be physically identified. That is because they were built at separate locations. This separation is most probably due to disruption of the town's growth. It can be seen on the map that each mahalle (probably in the early stages of its formation) consists of some houses. A relatively more important road connects each mahalle to the bazaar complex.

Inner city roads and streets in Iran did not develop in straight lines and at right angles for two basic reasons. First because of the absence of wheeled and fast transportation systems. The second reason was a more technical problem which had to do with the nature and plasticity of the most common construction material used in Iran, namely mud. Mud bricks (baked or unbaked) and mud covering were the only materials used in the majority of buildings in most parts of the central plateau. Because of its characteristics as a building material, mud can only support vertical pressure. The total inadequacy of brick against bending forces and torsion led to the development of a special building technique in Iran, where all the load forces were transferred into the vertical. The most natural answer to the need for covering a space, in the absence of



19th century DAM

1 to 7-city gates

Map No. 12

8 The DAZAAR'S old takie

9 Takie

10 Mosque & public bath

11 Public Bath

12 Caravanserai

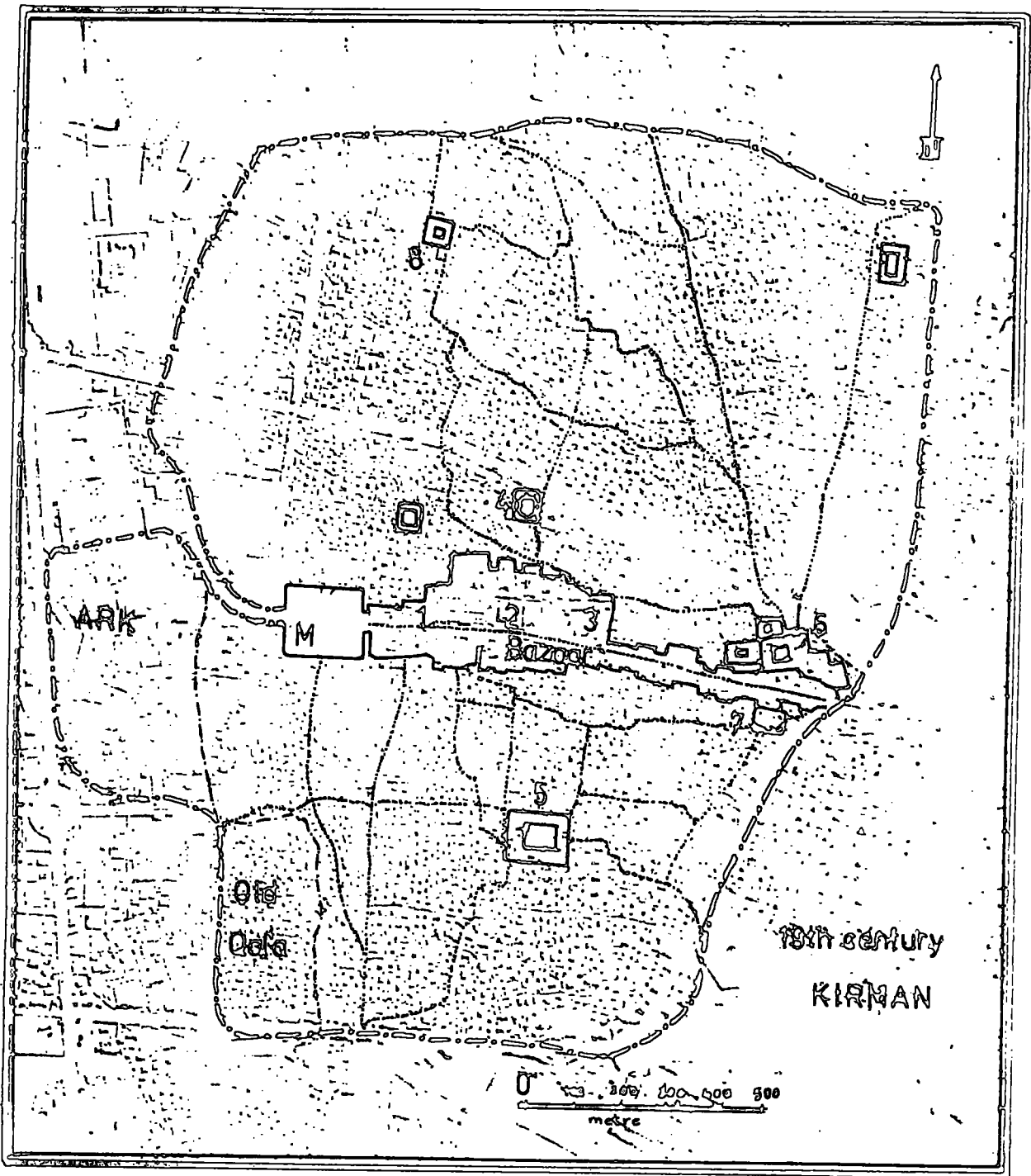
13 Shrine

wood or any suitable material for use as a beam, was brick vault and arch. The weight of a roof transferred to supporting walls by vaults and arches produced an oblique force, pushing the walls towards the outside. To overcome this problem the wall had to be either fairly thick and heavy to resist the oblique force or the force had to be reduced or neutralized by an opposite force. Many of the arches still standing today in the streets of old cities of Iran are to support the two walls on their sides. It is certainly because of this very technical problem of mud that most of the towns built by this material look so condensely built. Undoubtedly in the bazaar complex, where the value of space did not allow heavy walls to be built and where people spent the day for running their business, covered streets were the most logical answer to keep the whole complex in one piece and secure it from outside and protect the occupants from the hot summer's sun and cold winter's wind.

### KIRMAN

The city of Kirman, like most other central Iranian cities, is located next to mountains. This city received its water from four directions, but mainly from the south East. Qanats brought the water to the town from a distance of c.35 Km. The oldest site of Kirman is a mound with the ruins of a fortress left from the pre-Islamic period. Aerial photographs of Kirman (1956) enable us to recognise the latest city wall and the 19th century situation of the city.<sup>1</sup>





Map No. 13

the aerial photo 1956

1. COPPERSMITH BAZAAR
  2. MASUMI SCHOOL
  3. VAKIL CARAVANSERAI
  4. CHEHEL-SOTUN MOSQUE
  5. MALEK MOSQUE (1090 A.D.)
  6. THE JAME MOSQUE (end of the 14th century A.D.)
  7. HEZAR KHAN TAKIE
  8. QOTBIE SCHOOL (13th century AD)
- M. THE MAIDAN

Once again the bazaar is on the major road of the city connecting two gates which opened towards the Gulf and Isfahan respectively. The oldest part of the town seems to be the south-eastern corner where the Malik mosque (built c.1090 A.D.) stands. The next growth of the city took place in the 13th century in the north-western part of the actual walled city, where a school and a complex of public houses were built. Two sets of Qanats bringing water to the city from the south-east and the north-west confirm the pattern of growth from those two sides. Later, in the 14th century, the construction of the Jame' Mosque, next to the eastern gate of the city, indicates new areas being developed in that part of the town. From the aerial photographs of 1956, a major thoroughfare can be distinguished connecting the two northern and southern gates of the city. The road from the southern gate (Rig-Abad gate) towards the centre of the town is partly covered and is called the Hindu-Bazaar. There are the remains of an old citadel which was frequently used prior to the 16th century. That was when Kirman was the main connection between the Persian Gulf and Khorassan (north west of Iran) on the one hand, and Azarbaijan (the north-west) on the other. Old names of streets and quarters (mahalle) are good indicators of the existence of a Qal'a and a maidan near the southern gate.

By the development of Isfahan as the centre of economic and political life of the country, Kirman became a link

between the Gulf (the port of Gumbrun or Bandar-i-Abassi on the Hormuz strait) and the capital, Isfahan. The western gate, which opened towards Yazd and Isfahan, gained its economic importance by mid-16th century. A new citadel (Arg) was built at this gate and the major thoroughfare of the city became the east-west road (the actual covered bazaar of Kirman). Later, a complex of mosque, school, public bath, open space for ceremonies, a maidan and a caravanserai was built on this road (18th century). This complex was part of the new bazaar of Kirman which today is still functioning at the local level. By the end of the 19th century all areas inside the walled city of Kirman were built and new quarters were growing outside the walls. The Zoroastrians' quarter has traditionally been on the north and outside the city. After the wall lost its significance, this minority group mixed with the urban population in newly-built areas. The density of Zoroastrian residences is still higher on the northern and north-eastern sides of the city.<sup>2</sup>

The other minority group which has traditionally lived in a separate residential quarter in Kirman is the Jewish community. The Jewish quarter used to be on the north-western corner of the city. The quarter of this religious minority, unlike the previous one, used to be inside the walled city. There are no reports about the social significance of these minorities in the earlier history of

Kirman. However, it is generally known that Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kirman were involved in trade with their fellow counterparts (Parsies) in India during the 16th and 17th centuries.

### ISFAHAN

Isfahan gained the highest level of (pre-modern) urban development in Iran in the 17th century. This city became a metropolis, one of the most important centres of trade in the whole of Asia. The geographical setting of Isfahan on the river Zayande-Rud was undoubtedly an important element in its development.<sup>3</sup>

The site of early mediaeval Isfahan can be distinguished by the location of buildings. The Jame' mosque stands close to the old maidan as in many other cities. That is where caravans first stopped in the city. The major commercial thoroughfare passing through the city connected the northern gate to the southern. These gates opened to caravan routes from the Gulf and Shiraz on the south and from Tabriz and Trebizond on the north.

During the first half of the 17th century Isfahan became the biggest and the most populated city in Iranian history. This was because, for the first time, planning at an urban level was taking place in Iran. The famous Chahar-Bagh (four gardens) street was planned as an extension to a magnificent complex consisting of a sophisticated bazaar

with all its necessary spaces; a huge congregational mosque (Shah mosque), a ceremonial royal residence (Ali-Qapu) and an exclusive royal mosque. All these buildings were located on the four sides of a rectangular maidan (c. 500m by 170 m). The new maidan was built at the southern end of the old bazaar. The new maidan seems to have been built as a continuation of the old one. The new maidan stood at the centre of the city. The maidan has always been an economic space and a part of the bazaar complex which often performed other functions, such as a place for religious gatherings, polo-games, annual festivities, etc. This space was also used for military training in the early period of the formation of a standing army in Iran (first in the 17th century and again in the 19th century and onwards).

The two main entrances to the city remained on the north and the south after the new expansion. The rapid growth of the city resulted in the creation of new quarters. A planned network of open canals distributed the river water in the city. The settlement of Armenians on the southern bank of the river introduced a new residential area (New Julfa) of a religious as well as ethnic minority in the Isfahan conurbation, separated from the city by the river. Jews, being traditionally residents of Isfahan, had their quarters next to the old city on the north-eastern part of the old maidan, in a mahalle called Jubare.

The growth of Isfahan was basically the result of

the economic progress and political circumstances of 16th century Iran, which brought this city to the forefront. Iranian commercial life flourished under a powerful central state and the expansion of a European mercantile bourgeoisie seeking cheap primary goods and affluent markets. Undoubtedly the position of the palace in Iranian society enabled the king to build cities and workshops and to control the merchant capital. This might be why 17th century Isfahan is often called a "fiat city".<sup>4</sup>

The everyday life of mediaeval Iranian cities has not been studied yet. However, as far as the network of old streets and the traditional pattern of these cities show, most kinds of urban activities were associated with the bazaar.<sup>5</sup> It is suggested, for example, that in 17th century Isfahan, with a population of approximately 600,000, more than 6000 camel loads of food and firewood were necessary for daily consumption.<sup>6</sup> Accessibility and methods of distribution define, to some extent, the pattern of streets and public services, such as gozar (lit. means path, but in a city it is where the internal streets of a mahalle meet an external street), bazaartech (small bazaar) etc. in each sector of the city. The extent of household production has not been studied in Isfahan, but in the case of Kashan, as we shall see later, the location of workshops among the houses inside the mahalle (in the case of the early 20th century) shows the expansion of industry, especially textiles.

During the troubled decades of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, especially after the Afghans' attack on the city, Isfahan lost its population and prosperity. The remaining few tens of thousands live a simple life among areas of ruins of what was once glorious Isfahan. It was not until the 19th century that Isfahan once again started to grow, this time as an ordinary regional centre and city in the central Iranian plateau.

### KASHAN

Located at the foothills of Karkas mountains, Kashan oasis covers an area of about 15 km. by 3 km. stretching from western hills to eastern sand dunes. Undoubtedly the natural spring of FIN has been the essential motive for the settlement of several communities in this oasis since the fifth millennium B.C.

Kashan is recorded as a town since the 10th century A.D. The oldest building of Kashan belongs to late 11th century. Once again the direction of flowing water corresponds to the direction of urban growth. Oldest sites of Kashan are located at the western part of the city. A half demolished minaret (Minar-e-Zein-ed-Din), now located at the centre of the town, was the indicator of the eastern end of 12th and 13th century Kashan. Ruins of a fortress at the south-western corner of the city (erected in 13th century) indicate the earliest fortifications. This part of the walled Kashan



A TYPICAL STREET IN KASHAN

Drawing No. 2



did not grow further because of its location which prevented adequate water supply. Like most other central Iranian cities the Jame' Mosque and the old Maidan of Kashan are next to each other close to one of the oldest gates of Kashan (Haj-Jamal). The oldest thoroughfare of Kashan connected the two gates of the north (Haj-Jamal) and of the south-west (Lathore) Those two gates opened to the roads coming from Khorassan and Azarbaijan from the north, Isfahan and Bagdad from the south. By the development of Isfahan and the maritime trade in the 17th century the south gate of Kashan became important, connecting the city to the south of the country (Isfahan Gate). In the meantime, new sections were built in the north-eastern part of the city.

The new extension consisted of a large caravanserai known as the Royal Guesthouse, a royal residence and a new section added to the eastern end of the bazaar called coupersmiths bazaar (this section is still operated by coupersmiths). The Guesthouse and the Palace were located on the eastern side of a polo field where the new Gate opening to the new section of the bazaar was on its southern side. This open space seems to have been planned similar to the Maiden-i-Shah of Isfahan but was never fully built. Kashan was almost entirely destroyed after an earthquake in early 19th century. However, it was rebuilt preserving its previous pattern. This was mainly because the social and geographical forces shaping the city had not changed.

Kashan has always been famous for two major industries during her mediaeval history; silk and faience works. Its location between Gilan, a northern province of Iran, which produced silk, and Isfahan, which was the market for silk materials, helped this city to specialize in that industry. This traditional skill has continued until today. After an investigation of the distribution pattern of weaving workshops in one sector of Kashan, the extent of dispersion of this cottage industry was revealed. The beginning of the establishment of cottage industry inside mahalles goes back to the 17th century. That was when the silk and other luxury materials were produced either for the Palace or the markets which were often operated by the European merchants. This new artisanal industry, transferred from the countryside into the town, caused a further separation between production and exchange, i.e. the craftsman and the merchant. While mercantile practices were exclusive to the bazaar, there were new productive activities inside the residential areas. Introduction of new industrial workshops out of the bazaar did not create any new sector in the city. Workshops were absorbed within the traditional urban districts.

The presence of workshops in mahalles produced a new type of relationship between the mahalle and the bazaar. The delivery of raw materials to workshops and the collection of finished or semi-finished products back to the bazaar created a new internal circulation inside the city.

The type of movement took place alongside the delivery of everyday household goods (such as salt and firewood). One of the functions of open spaces in each mahalle was to operate as an unloading space. Where the loading and unloading was necessary in the absence of a Takie or a Hosseinie (open spaces for religious gatherings) the road itself was widened to form a corner for this purpose. These spaces which can still be seen in old streets of Kashan are called Fetahe (opening).

There are virtually no studies done on the geographical pattern of distribution of Qanats inside Iranian cities. However, some observations on the water distribution techniques and regulations in Kashan helps one to visualize the connection between the Qanat system and the pattern of streets and built up spaces. Before the introduction of a piped water system (25 years ago), every house inside the old city of Kashan had access to the qanat water. The qanat usually ran to a depth of 2 to 6 metres under the surface. There were seven qanats bringing water to Kashan from the western and south western hills. Each qanat watered one or two mahalle. Towards the eastern side of the city qanat run openly and their excess water was used to irrigate gardens and orchards at the eastern end of the city. Qanat passed through the courtyards of the houses. A typical old house in Kashan and most other central Iranian cities consists of a central rectangular courtyard with a

fairly large pool (appr. 2 x 4 m.) in the middle and a row of rooms on the four sides of the courtyard. The central pool is built at a level at which qanat water can easily fill it. Therefore, in order to have access to the qanat water, the courtyard's surface had to go down below the street level. Knowing that water passes through the pools from one house to another, it is not difficult to imagine how the direction of water flow can influence the arrangement of houses belonging to different social classes. When a qanat first came to surface or entered a house in the city it was usually in the house of one of the influential citizens. In 19th century Kashan, these people were usually wealthy merchants, land owning ecclesiastics or governors and high ranking officials. After passing through two or three houses the qanat was divided into two or three branches and each branch watered two or three more houses. This division was continued until the last houses had the qanat water running into their courtyards only once every ten days or every fortnight. The points of division of qanat were also inside the houses of the influential people. To take care of the qanats and to operate the rotation of water, special people were recruited who were called Mirab (commander of water). Mirabs were usually considered respectable and trustworthy.

They operated under the control of the representative of the mahalle and the local governor of the city. It was this hierarchical and complex system of water

distribution which played an important part in the pattern of location of social groups in Kashan.

Studying the geographical pattern of distribution of Qanat in central Iranian cities is a time consuming and expensive task. Nevertheless, it would have a great impact in revealing valuable information about the urban life in mediaeval Iran.

### Conclusion

Iranian cities have so far been classified and discussed by orientalists in relation to other urban centres of the Muslim countries in the Middle East. They have been generally considered as being mostly under the domination of Islam. This, however, has produced some controversies over the concept of the "Islamic City". In his article Professor Hourani questions the validity of the "Islamic City" accepted by many orientalists, each of them using the concept in a specific way.<sup>1</sup> From the writings of most of the orientalists dealing with those cities, there emerges a vivid sense of continuity and persistency. There seems to be an implicit belief that the Islamic City has reproduced its pattern all along its life.<sup>2</sup> Detailed studies of cities in Muslim countries, however, have forwarded new questions about such generalizations.

In the light of the new studies there are two major facts so far accepted by scholars studying the subject.

First, it is widely accepted today that diversities of urban patterns in the Muslim world are far greater to allow any assertion assuming those cities as belonging to a single category.<sup>3</sup> Second, historical studies have shown structural changes in most of the so-called Middle Eastern cities casting serious doubt on the questions of the continuity of pattern.

After following the historical development of central Iranian cities it becomes clear that they have produced different patterns in the course of their history. It also becomes clear that their patterns have not been the result of one social or geographical factor but the outcome of a complex relationship between man and nature on the one hand, and man and man on the other hand. By taking into consideration the most general patterns of townships in the central Iranian Plateau it would be possible to identify three major periods of urban development.

First, the archaic period, as called in the dissertation, is when the city was but an administrative centre or a princely camp. During this period which ended by 9th century A.D. the Palace or castle (Dezh) stood at the core of the city. The residential part of the town (Shahrestan) was usually at the foot or around the Dezh. Urban classes comprised of military commanders, ecclesiastics, representatives of the Palace, administrative officials (Divani) and the people. The people, at first, included agriculturalists who lived in towns; later it covered the craftsmen and traders as well. The immediate outskirts of the city were covered by the everyday cultivation of the people, orchards, gardens and mostly the water distribution system. This area became important when extra commercial

activities and growth of the town gave this so-called exterior (Rabaz) an economic significance. It was at the dawn of Islam that the Rabaz started to become an important part of the city. Significance of the Rabaz, however, meant a new urban structure, for the old cluster representing the princely camp could not inhibit new social and economic activities.

The second period had its roots in the 6th century A.D. This phase of urban development was characterized by the appearance of permanent market places in the Rabaz of the old cities. The formation of market places in cities was under the influence of overland trade between the East and the West. Introduction of transit trade, or the mercantile economy, affected the pattern of urban centres in central Iran. The change started from those cities which were on the Silk Route. Historical evidences for this fact are the construction of the mosque in the Rabaz of those cities after the introduction of Islam. A new urban pattern was recognized by the contemporaries, at first by the three components : Kohandezh, Shahrestan and Rabaz. Later, they were replaced by arabic names with more recognition given to the market place.

This period of urban development in central Iran (9th to 15th A.D.) was strongly subject to the regional diversity of the modes of life. The nomadic life in northern districts of the Plateau, especially during Mongols, was a



specific feature of the mediaeval Iran which influenced the urban life. Introduction of Pastoral City into the Iranian Plateau (Sultaniya as the best example) was contemporary to the dominance of the pastoral economy in a tribal social and political structure in Iran. Necessity of exchange in such an economy favoured the expansion of an urban commercial sector. On the other hand, tribal social division introduced a new communal unit into cities corresponding to clans. Previous ethnic and religious urban divisions were absorbed into this new form of urban division. The citadel, or as then called Qal'a remained as the arsenal, treasury and the military camp. The bazaar developed first as the market place and later became an urban complex inhabiting all economic activities as well as political and ideological institutions.

At the times of the formation of centralized states, cities were important nuclei to control regional surplus. Corn producing regions of the Iranian Plateau, where irrigated farming has been traditionally practiced, were places in which administrative organizations were needed to appropriate and to control the agrarian surplus.

Central deserts of Iran had forced the transit routes towards their fringes where the deserts meet surrounding mountains. These were also regions in which irrigated farming took place. Hence the combination of those two factors reinforced the production of urban centres in those

regions after each period of decline. Pastoral cities like Sultaniya and Ardabil being located in pastoral regions were associated with trade routes as well. Here, one can conclude that the mediaeval cities of the Iranian Plateau were regional centres developed with close connections to the trade routes.

The third stage of urban development began together with the historical conjuncture of three major incidents:

- 1) The political hegemony of the supporters of a radical Muslim sect (Shi'ism), themselves descendents of a Turk clan, which resulted in the strong centralized state of the Safavids.
- 2) The establishment of round Africa trade route and the introduction of foreign merchant capital into the Iranian market.
- 3) The formation of the Ottoman Empire.

Expansion of the commercial sector of cities was the inevitable outcome of the contemporary economic forces both from inside and outside of the Iranian society. Specialization of cities in different crafts and goods production was a further step towards the division of urban social groups. Internal division of cities into sections called mahalle became a dominant form in most of the central Iranian cities (typical examples are: Isfahan, Kashan, Tabriz and Yazd). The Bazaar developed further more and absorbed most of the

economic, social and political activities of the city. The area of the commercial sectors of the Bazaar in those cities as compared with the total area of the city is a good indicator of the dominance of the mercantile economy in the period of 17th to early 20th centuries A.D.

Having followed the historical development of the central Iranian cities, some essential questions are raised, answers to which are decisive for a comprehensive analysis of not only the mediaeval Iranian cities but for the Iranian social history as well. It is generally accepted that cities have been vital centres for the formation of centralized states all through the Iranian history. One of the essential tasks that cities fulfilled was their function as centres of exchange. Looking for the significance of exchange in the mediaeval Iranian economy, however, leads to a more essential question; "what was the economic formation of Mediaeval Iran". It seems that the answer to this latter question lies partially in the pastoral economy and the nomadic social structure. This point needs a careful investigation to reveal the relationships between social classes through the processes of production and distribution in that society.

The result of such a study would be essential also to show the property relations and patterns of appropriation of the social wealth. As far as the urban morphology is concerned, this is important in giving shape to the townscape. We already know about the presence of the private land ownership in mediaeval Iranian cities but very little is known

about the extent to which this kind of land existed or about its proportion to the endowment lands and to the crown lands. Practically none of the previous studies has dealt with the question of rent in the Iranian urban areas in that period. No one has yet studied the capacity in which a tenant of a boutique in a caravansarai or in the bazaar stood in relation to his possessions. What were his rights on the land or the spaces he occupied? To answer these questions there is very little one can achieve by studying the Islamic laws for mainly two reasons. First the so called Islamic law has always been subject to change according to historical events and more so in Iran. Second, there have been many practices performed in the context of social relations in Muslim countries which were not foreseen in the Islamic law.

The last question, but by no means the least, which comes to mind after studying the mediaeval Iranian cities is : how is it that in the absence of the market economy, market places have grown so large in those cities and have absorbed material and non material life? In western societies it was not until the introduction of capitalist relations that the market developed as the focus of the economic system. Cities of Iran and some neighbouring countries, however, had their bazaar well developed, dominating the urban structure long before the establishment of the Italian mercantile cities. This fact once again calls upon an historical investigation of the mediaeval Iranian social and economic formations. It would only be after such a study that one can analyse the Iranian urban

structure.

After taking into consideration the process of the Iranian history, it becomes clear that urban centres have played an important role especially in its mediaeval period. That is why studying the role of the urban centres in mediaeval Iran will not only uncover the essence of the traditional urban structure in Iran but would also help to understand the social history of mediaeval Iran.

Introduction:

- 1) This idea is developed and discussed by Max Weber. After defining the "urban community", Weber suggested 5 features for a human settlement to constitute a full urban community i.e. a city (1) a fortification, (2) a market, (3) a court of its own and at least partially autonomous law, (4) a related form of association, (5) at least partial autonomy and autosephaly. (see Max Weber, 1958, pp. 54, 55.
- 2) Marcais, W. 1961, pp. 59 - 67 see also Von Grunebaum 1955 pp. 141 - 58.
- 3) See the extensive discussion by Lapidus in "Middle Eastern Cities", Lapidus I., 1970, pp. 47 - 79.

Chapter I

- 1) De Planhol, 1968, p. 410.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Sykes
- 4) Fisher, W.B. 1968, p.5.
- 5) Ganji, M.H., 1968, pp. 212 - 249.
- 6) Bowen-Jones H., 1968, p.566.
- 7) Beaumont, P., 1971, pp. 39 - 50.
- 8) Ibid.
- 9) Ibid.

- 10) Bowen-Jones H., 1968, p.571.
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) Lambton, A.K.S. 1953, p. 306
- 14) Iran Almanac, 1973, Agricultural data.
- 15) Bowen, Jones, H., 1968, p. 584.

## Chapter II

- 1) Christensen, A., 1944, p.15.
- 2) Herzfeld, E.E., 1935, p.21.
- 3) Geiger, W., 1895, Vol. I, p.247.
- 4) This assumption is questioned by the new generation of archaeologists, but its validity has not been empirically disproved yet; for the debate see "East and West" from sixties onwards.
- 5) Most of the orientalist and historians of antiquity share this idea : see Christensen A., 1944, Christensen, A., 1931, Herzfeld, E.E. 1935.
- 6) Ancient Assyrian King Sargon the Second (727-705 B.C.)
- 7) See Herzfeld, E.E., 1935, p.12.
- 8) Hezodotus I., 89.
- 9) Polibius x - 27 - 9 c.f. Herzfeld, E.E., 1945, p.22.
- 10) Christensen, A., 1944, pp. 15 - 23.
- 11) Chirshman, R. 1964, Vol I. p.130.
- 12) Christensen, A., 1944, p.135.
- 13) Ibid.

- 14) Christensen, A., 1944, p.16.
- 15) For the relevant documents see Pope U.A., 1938,  
Vol. I. and Ghirshman E., 1964.
- 16) Withfogel, K.A., 1957, p.308.
- 17) Ghirshman, R. 1964, p.130.
- 18) Ghirshman, R., 1964, p.224.
- 19) Ibid.
- 20) Ghirshman, R. 1964., p.138.
- 21) Iran J.B.I.P.S. Vol. XII 1974, pp.217 - 22.
- 22) Ibid.
- 23) Ghirshman, R., 1964 pp. 147 - 214.
- 24) Ibid.
- 25) Ibid.
- 26) For the discussion about the nature of the Persepolis  
see Ghirshman 1964, pp. 147 - 214.
- 27) Herzfeld, E.E., 1935, p.45.
- 28) There are no records of this place previous to the  
Greeks, that is why it is called with its Greek name.
- 29) Lattimore, O. 1971, p.301.
- 30) Rostovtseff, M. 1971, p.23.
- 31) Pigulevskaja, N., 1963, pp. 17 - 33.
- 32) Ibid.
- 33) Ibid.
- 34) Ibid.
- 35) Pigulevskaja, N., 1963 Chapter VI.
- 36) Ibid.



- 37) Henning, W.B., 1951, p.18.
- 38) Christensen, A., 1944, p.18.
- 39) Piguleskaja, N., 1963, pp. 80 - 82.
- 40) Ibid.
- 41) Isidor of Charax 5 & 6.
- 42) Ghirshman, R., 1962, Vol 2. p.33.
- 43) Kambakhsh Fard, 1973, p.196.
- 44) Ghirshman, R., 1962, Vol. 2. p.359.
- 45) Pope, U.A., 1938 Vol I. p.
- 46) Hansman, J. & Stronach, D. 1970, p.47.
- 47) Markwart, J., 1931, p.56.
- 48) Hansman, J., 1967, pp. 21 - 58.
- 49) Ibid.
- 50) Ibid.
- 51) Debevoise, N.C. 1938, p.203.
- 52) This conflict has existed in the societies in which mercantile activity has been restricted or succumbed by the social and political forces of the ruling classes. Italian mercantile republics XV to XVII Centuries however, are classical examples of the political denomination of mercantile economy at the dawn of the flourishing of the western bourgeoisie.
- 53) Pigulenskaja, N. et al 1974, pp. 103 - 104.
- 54) Ibid.
- 55) Pigulenskaja N. 1963, p.127.

- 56) Ibid.
- 57) Ibid.
- 58) This social classification can be seen in many parts of the AVESTA.
- 59) Christensen, A., 1944, p. 101.
- 60) Christensen, A., 1944, p. 98.
- 61) Adams, R.M. 1962, pp. 109 - 122
- 62) Christensen, A., 1944, p. 101.
- 63) for the current discussions on this issue see Weber "the city", Wittfogel "Oriental despotism", Anderson "Lineages of the Absolutist State".
- 64) Christensen, A., 1944, p. 101.
- 65) Pigulevskaja, N. 1963, pp. 122 - 123
- 66) Tabari, th. 1879, p. 820; Cities mentioned by Tabari are : ARDESHIR - KHAVARREH (GOR) in Pars, RAM - ARDESHIR, REV-ARDESHIR, HORMAZD-ARDESHIR (this city, according to Pigulevskaja corresponds to the Souk-el-Ahwaz or Ahwaz), VEH-ARDESHIR (known to be next to Seleucia & Ctesiphon) ASTRABADH (Karkha de Maison Iranica Antiqua Vol. VII or Karkha Maisan; see Hansman, 1967 pp. 21 - 59), PASA - ARDESHIR (Hat, in Bahrein, c.f. Pigulevskaja 1963), BUD - ARDESHIR (Near Mossul, c.f. Pigulevskaja 1963).
- 67) Whitehouse, D. & Williamson A. 1973, pp. 29 - 50.

- 68) Ibid.
- 69) Ghirshman, R., 1962, pp. 122 - 123.
- 70) The location of this town is not certain. For different suggestions see Whitehouse & Williamson 1973 and Pigulevskaja, 1963 p.123.
- 71) Whitehouse & Williamson 1973, p.35.
- 72) Whitehouse D., 1974, p.5.
- 73) Series of reports on excavation at Siraf in Iran from 1970 to 74.
- 74) Whitehouse, D., 1972 report No. 5. According to archaeological survey, 72% of the 700 ha. cultivated land of Siraf might have been irrigated, and according to the size of the city Whitehouse considers the possibility that some neighbouring villages with their fertile villages were not only serving caravan routes but also supplied Siraf with food.
- 75) Central buildings of the site are proved to have been workshops. They belong to both Sassanian and early Islamic periods.

### Chapter III

- 1) Pigulevskaja, N. 1961, pp. 1 - 14.
- 2) Petroshevski, I.P., 1971, pp. 13 - 38.
- 3) Ibid.
- 4) Ibn Khaldun, (French translation Vol I "Mogaddima" p.313)
- 5) c.f. Lambton, A.K.S. 1963 pp. 10 - 53.
- 6) Petroshevski, I.P. 1971 pp. 39 - 42.

- 7 ) Aubin, J. 1970, p.70.
- 8 ) The Atlas of the Early Christian World, London 1959, map 36.
- 9 ) Aubin, J., 1970, p.70.
- 10) c.f. Iran Vols. VI to X years 1968 - 72.
- 11) Ghirshman, R. Vol II 1962, Chapter I.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) Ibid.
- 14) Aubin, J. 1970, p.70.
- 15) Qal'a is the arabic word used for Dezh or Kohandizh for the first time in Xth century A.D. c.f. "Hudud al 'Alam" anon. and also "Mo'jam-al-Boldan" by Yagut.
- 16) Grierson, P. 1960, pp. 241 - 264.
- 17) Lambton, A.K.S. 1963, pp. 10 - 53.
- 18) Grierson, P., 1960, pp. 241 - 264.
- 19) Appointment of Hojaj-ben-Yusef in 694 A.D. as governor of the Eastern lands is a good example. New tax was imposed on newly converted muslims. Peasants carried a lead seal bearing the name of the place to which the peasant belonged not to let him escape the tax and corvee. During Ibn-Yusef's governorship 130 thousand people are reported to have been killed in Mesopotamia. For details see "Islam dar Iran" by Petroshevski, translated by K. Keshavaro Tehran 1971.

- 20) By the end of the 7th Century A.D. non Arab Muslims became subject to new rules enforcing socio-economic discriminations : see Petroshevsky 1971.
- 21) Deylam & Tabaristan are located on the north side of the Alborz mountains along the Caspian Sea.
- 22) A very good example of this phenomenon can be found in the first Chapter of "DIE VITAE DES SCHEIKH ABU ISHAQ AL-KAZARUNI and also in Siraf, where the mosque took the place of the fortress.
- 23) Istakhri, A.E. 1969 p.99; see also Ibn-Hugal 1967, p.49.
- 24) Ashraf, A. 1967 - 1968 Series of articles.
- 25) Kohandezh consists of two Persian words, Kohan (old, ancient) and Dezh (citadel or fortress). In early Islamic period Dezh was called Kohandezh.
- 26) Ibn-Hugal, 1967, pp. 166 - 167 (Persian translation).
- 27) Ibn-Hugal, 1967, (Persian translation) & Estakhri, 1968, (Persian translation).
- 28) Ibid.
- 29) Ibn-Hugal, 1967, p.49.
- 30) Ibid.

#### Chapter IV

- 1) Khorassan is the north eastern province of Iran. This province has always been an important part of the country. The boundaries of this relatively fertile province have been subject to political conditions as

well as different modes of life through the Mediaeval Iran. During Mongols, for example, parts of this province which served the nomadic tribes as their summer resorts were considered together with the Caspian province of Mazandaran.

- 2) For a comprehensive analysis of a typical historical case of financial and political crisis under the Abassid Caliphate, see : Lambton A.K.S. 1967, pp. 41 - 50.
- 3) Best example of such movement can be found in "Tarikh - i - Mubarak - i - Ghazani" : Rashid-ed-Din, 1940.
- 4) Lattimore, O. & E. 1971, pp. 22 - 25.
- 5) This incidence is discussed by all the historians of Assia and there is no need to be repeated.
- 6) Whitehouse, D. & Williams, A. 1973, pp. 29 - 51.
- 7) All the nomads of Fars were called Kurds by the early mediaeval reporters. This is hardly any reference to other tribes that today are known in Zagros.
- 8) Ibn-Hugal, 1967, pp. 30 - 40.
- 9) Total annual revenue of a muslim is entitled to "Ushr" meaning tenth. This sum is collected from muslims by the Imam to meet the costs of charities.
- 10) By "Ships of the Fars sea" Ibn-Hugal meant total maritime transactions, imports and exports, of the Iranian ports of the Persian Gulf.

- 11) Whitehouse, D. Williams, A. 1973, pp. 29 - 51.
- 12) Ibn-Faqih, 1970, p.20.
- 13) The word "Shahr" meaning the city is often used by historians of mediaeval Islam referring to a region.
- 14) Aubin, J. 1970 pp. 65 - 77 see also Le Strange, G. 19, p.63.
- 15) Persistent historical examples are : Neishabur, Tus (later Mashad), Jorhan, Kerman & Tabriz.
- 16) Spuller, B. 1972, p.441.
- 17) Spuler, B. 1972, pp. 440 - 442.
- 18) Ibid.
- 19) Ibid.
- 20) Ibid.
- 21) Spuler, B. 1972, p.429.
- 22) Diwan, broadly speaking means state offices dealing with legal and fiscal matters.
- 23) Rashid-ed-Din, 1940, pp. 230 - 243.
- 24) Ibid.
- 25) Rashid-ed-Din, 1959, Kassim
- 26) Ibid.
- 27) Ibid.
- 28) Bulliet, R. 1972, pp. 89 - 234.
- 29) Beihaqi, A. 1963, Vol 2, pp. 854 - 55.
- 30) Ibid.
- 31) for the usage of the word "patrician" and its reference see Bulliet 1972, p.20.

- 32) Bulliet, 1972, p.78.
- 33) Rashid-ed-Din, 1940, pp. 230 - 243.
- 34) Spuler, B. 1972, pp. 430 - 32.
- 35) Ibid.
- 36) Ibid.
- 37) Ibid.
- 38) Rashid-ed-Din 1940, pp. 336 - 37.
- 39) Ibid.
- 40) Rashid-ed-Din 1940, pp. 264 - 65 & 243.
- 41) Rashid-ed-Din 1940, pp. 243 - 286.
- 42) Rashid-ed-Din 1940, p. 243
- 43) Rashid-ed-Din 1940, p. 206.
- 44) Ibid.
- 45) Ibid.
- 46) Ibid.
- 47) "Bam" is the best example for details see Chapter VI.
- 48) Mustowfi, 1913, p.141.
- 49) Ibid.
- 50) Ibid.
- 51) Ibid.
- 52) Mustowfi, 1913, p.76.
- 53) Ibid.
- 54) Ibid.
- 55) Hafiz Abru, 1971 pp. 126 - 129.
- 56) Mustowfi, 1913, p.76.
- 57) Waterfield, R. 1973, pp. 52 - 53.



- 58) Ibid.
- 59) Mustowfi, 1913, pp. 55 - 56.
- 60) Ibid.
- 61) Ibid.
- 62) Mustowfi, 1913 p.57.
- 63) Ibid.

### Chapter V

- 1) Waterfield, R., 1973, pp. 48 - 50.
- 2) Fischel, W.J., 1968, pp. 118 - 125.
- 3) Minorsky, V., 1955, p.248.
- 4) After the establishment of a central autocratic system in 14th Century A.D. new social relations were needed to secure its economic base which was by then autonomous and independent. Land reform and regular tribute collection from the land needed the Divan and its bureaucracy. This, however, inevitably resulted in the introduction of new social classes into the ruling strata in opposition to the Mongol aristocracy. For details see Rashid-ed-Din, 1940, Passim.
- 5) During this period cities of central Asia made a vast progress. Samarghand is the best example as the Persian speaking centre of art and architecture of the period.
- 6) Minorsky, V. 1955, p.250.

- 7) Hurewitz, 1956, pp. 16 - 18, 68 - 70.
- 8) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.12.
- 9) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.14.
- 10) Alam-Ara, 1971, pp. 104 - 124.
- 11) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.15.
- 12) Ibid.
- 13) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.16.
- 14) Alam-Ara, 1971, p.106.
- 15) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.15.
- 16) Ibid.
- 17) Tadhkirat-al-Muluk ff. 6 & 7.
- 18) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.174.
- 19) Chardin, Vol V., p.429.
- 20) Chardin, Vol VII, p.253.
- 21) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.26.
- 22) Minorsky, V., 1943 Chapter One passim.
- 23) Chardin Vol. V. pp. 384 - 392.
- 24) Fisher, W.B. 1968, p.106.
- 25) Du Mans, R., 1890, pp. 194 - 206.
- 26) Tadhkirat-al-Muluk ff. 32 - 49.
- 27) Massignon, L. 1931 passim
- 28) Tadkhirat-al-Muluk ff. 76 - 79.
- 29) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.20, quoted from Chardin  
Vol IV p.93.
- 30) Tadhkirat-al-Muluk ff. 76 - 79.

- 31) c.f. Cahen, C. 1970 pp. 51 - 64. : see also Chardin Vol V, p.290 where he raises an interesting point about the absence of "nobility" in Iran. The concept is used in its European context. However, it shows the difficulties of any class formation, in the western sense, in that society.
- 32) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.20.
- 33) Ibid.
- 34) Ibid.
- 35) Du Mans, R., 1890, p.192
- 36) Du Mans, R., 1890, p.183.
- 37) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.30.
- 38) Du Mans, R., 1890, p.365.
- 39) c.f. Hurwitz Vol I.1956 passim.
- 40) Ibid.
- 41) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.19.
- 42) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.33.
- 43) Ibid.
- 44) Ibid, quoted from Della Valle.
- 45) Waterfield, 1943, pp. 57 - 86, see also Alam-Ara Vol II passim.
- 46) Ibid.
- 47) Ibid.
- 48) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.30.
- 49) Ibid.
- 50) Lapidus, I.M., 1969 pp. 63 - 69.

- 51) Zarrabi, 1956, pp. 236 & 276.
- 52) Minorsky, V., 1943, p.17.
- 53) Ibid.
- 54) The dam of Qohrud near Kashan built in 17th century A.D. is a good example. For details see "Ab va Abiari dar Iran" 1974, Tehran.
- 55) Issawi, C., 1971, p.13.
- 56) Reisner, I.M., 1973, pp. 113 - 164.
- 57) Pigulenskaja, N.V. 1976, pp. 296 - 324.
- 58) Issawi, C. 1971, p.13.
- 59) Ibid.
- 60) Hanway, I., 1754, p.156.

#### Chapter VI

- 1) Sir Percy Sykes produced a map of Kirman at the turn of this century which corresponds very much to the aerial photo showing the old and walled part of Kirman. See Sykes, P. 1902, p.188.
- 2) English, P.W., 1966, Chapter II.
- 3) Spooner, B. 1974, pp. 681 - 712.
- 4) Golombek, L. 1974 pp. 18 - 44.
- 5) Ibid.
- 6) Ibid.

#### Conclusion

- 1) Hourani, 1970, first article.
- 2) Massignon & Sauvaget quoted in Hourani Ibid.
- 3) Ibid.

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and Electricity, Tehran, 1974.

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Alam-Ara see Iskandar beig Turkoman.

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Estakhri see Istakhri.

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